

LETTERS
FROM A
LADY of QUALITY
TO A
CHEVALIER.

Translated from the FRENCH.

By Mrs. HAYWOOD.

Vol. 13.



L O N D O N,

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Head, in Russel-Street, Covent-Garden. M.DCC.XXI.

Where may be had, VERTOTT's Relation of
Portugal, in English.

LETTERS

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*THE Rush of Winds,
which shake the aspiring
Cedar, spare the hum-
ble Reed: I am too
safe, in an insignificant Lowness, to
fear the Blasts of Envy, if the un-
questionable Judgment of those Per-
sons, who encourag'd me to under-
take the Translation of the follow-
A 2 ing*

ing Sheets, were not a sufficient Protection from whatever Malice or Ill-Nature might suggest; and I should not have troubled my Reader, with offering any thing in my own Defence, if the liberty I have taken, in many Places, of adding, and in others of diminishing (where I thought so doing would render the whole more entertaining) had not made it highly necessary. I am very sensible that, to those who consult the French, what I have done will appear to be more properly call'd a Paraphrase than a Translation; and perhaps, may be judg'd rather to proceed from a want of a true Knowledge of my Author, than any Amendment I could propose by making Alterations: but I hope that Curiosity, which leads them to such an Exami-

Examination, will be accompany'd with an impartial Consideration, that I have, in every Letter, kept close to the Business of the Original, and that I have made it my Care not to exceed the Meaning, wherever I have heighten'd the Expression, as well as not to retrench any thing but what was entirely superfluous. In Attempts of this kind the End seldom answers the Pains; People are, generally speaking, either so great Admirers of the past, or so little inclinable to favour the present, that all the Beauties, if there are any, are ascrib'd to the Original, and only the Imperfections fall to the share of the Translator: But I am not of a Humour to make myself very unhappy by such a Reflection. If those few I wish to please
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are satisfy'd, I shall not ask the
Question, whether it be with mine
or the French Author's part of the
Performance ; any more than I shall
be solicitous what Opinion the rest
of the World may have of it altoge-
ther.



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LETTERS

FROM A

Lady of Quality

TO A

CHEVALIER.



LETTER I.



NOTHING could have convinced me there was a Charm beyond your Conversation, till I received your obliging Letter this morning; which, too much for my Repose, assures me, that the more one permits one's-self to know you the more

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one shall find to admire, and that the Idea of such Excellencies as you are Master of, cannot be received at once. Is it to your *Love*, or to your *Wit*, I am indebted for the *Tenderness* of your Expressions?—But 'tis easy to guess what Answer you would make to such a Question; and if I call my own Heart to be the Judge, I know not how it could determine, without doing a Violence either to my Duty, or my Inclination.—My Virtue—my Discretion command me to think no otherwise of the fine things you say to me, than as the Effects of a Gallantry incident to your Humour, and which another Object might inspire as well as I. But while I am thus resolving, Sentiments of a far different nature check the Severity of these, and, with their soft Insinuations, half persuade me to believe you find something in me capable of creating the most serious Regard.—If it be so—if Time, and a thousand Services, confirm this last Opinion to be true, to what Extremes should I be driven?—How should I proceed in an Affair, which either way would go near to be the everlasting Destruction of my Peace—fain would I indulge the pleasing Image of my Passion, and yet preserve my Duty—but, Oh! my Reason tells me, that these two things are incompatible—Help me then with yours—

Let

Let *your* all-powerful Wit find out the means that I may love, and yet be innocent—I have heard much Talk of the Love of Souls—*that* certainly is the most Heavenly Union; and if it cannot be compleat unless Bodies join, let us, however, be *content* with that, since the other is an Impossibility—at least while we are here: Who knows but in some other World our Circumstances may be equal, and we may enjoy a Blessing which Honour refuses us in this.——Good God! How open do I lay myself, but I have a natural Aversion to all manner of Hypocrisy——besides, there is something in my Soul which forbids me to receive *you*, and tells me, that the very disguising of my Thoughts, which to any other Man would be a *Virtue*, to you would be a *Vice*: I speak to you with my Heart upon my Lips, and I shall never speak otherwise to you; nor need you doubt the Sincerity of my words, when you consult your own Perfections——a thousand Graces play about your Person—a thousand Charms adorn your Conversation——an Infinity of Wit and Gaiety shines through every thing you say and do—I say nothing of your Softness, I am not yet enough acquainted with your Heart——but if I may venture to form a Judgment from what I read in your Eyes, as well as Lines, it cannot be insensible.

—But I ought not to cherish such a Thought, 'tis dangerous to my Honour, and my Quiet; and when I think how many Women have been beguiled by that Belief, the most innocent Correspondence makes me tremble——In a word, the Fears I have both of *you*, and of *myself*, deter me from entering into too intimate an Acquaintance with you——the less Pleasure I take in seeing you, the more my Duty is secure——and is it not better for me to have the Satisfaction to know my Virtue's safe, than to put it to so hazardous a Tryal? ——Perhaps I am sufficiently assured of mine, not to need to fear even *you*, with all that undescribable Merit which you have; but then, to avoid a possibility of Danger, is still more sure: and I dare not so far depend upon my Resolution, as to be certain that nothing would escape me I should wish undone.——Let us then forbear any farther Conversation——Let us not meet, unless by accident——and, if I see you not so often as I would, it will be still more often than I ought to wish. I am married——I have no reason to regret the Condition I am in——I love my Husband——yet when you desire me, with all that persuasive Eloquence you are master of, to find some occasion whereby you may commence a Friendship with him, I cannot forbear letting you know, that I think

think 'tis impossible for him to have a greater Enemy. — Ah! how dangerous is it for a Husband to have Friends of your sort—I know no other Reason that should hinder us from embracing the Honour you would do us—You see how sincere I am ; nor am I less so, when I tell you, I shall not go about to *prevent* what I cannot *approve* ; but I shall never *seek* the means of creating an Intimacy, which in the end may prove so injurious to both him and me——As for your coming into my Company, I know not what to say, and I have cause to fear I have already said too much—however, I will not suffer you to be obliged to *me* for a Pleasure, which my Reason tells me I ought not to bestow ; I mean, I ought not to see you with *Design*, for I can be condemned neither by the World, nor my own Heart, should *Chance* determine for you.——This way only I can converse with you without a Crime ; I go often to the *Comedy*, the *Opera*, and other publick Diversions—I do not tell you, the expectation of meeting you, will bring me there more often than I used ; but I positively assure you, that my knowledge of your frequenting those Places shall not make me refrain going to them at all—If you ask any greater Marks of my Esteem, I must be obliged to deny you, and I conjure you not to lay me under the necessity

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necessity of doing any thing so contrary to my Inclination. ——— Farewel; I have writ a long Epistle, only to let you know you have nothing to hope from me in favour of your Passion; and that if you have a thousand Reasons to prefer *my Love* to *my Friendship*, I have ten thousand to chuse *your Friendship* before your *Love*.



LET-



LETTER II.

THE Letter you writ to me this morning, seems to have more of Gallantry than Sincerity—the Style appears more studied, and the Sentiments are expressed in a manner, which carry a greater share of Art than Nature.—What is your Design?—What will be the Consequence of a Conversation, which, in the very beginning, fills me with a thousand Terrors?—Is it not better for us both to continue as we are? and that you would not intreat with that submissive, yet prevailing Eloquence, what I have now no longer power to refuse you? Yes, I confess, too lovely! too persuasive Man! in spite of the Resolution I had made to see you no more, till some occasion, unknown to me, should present itself, that I neither can withstand the Opportunity you offer of meeting you at eight to-night in the *Tuileries*, nor defend my Heart from indulging a Delight, in the expectation of this Encounter. But, I believe, I shall not venture

ture to come alone, neither would it be proper; I will be walking there a little before the time, and bring a Friend with me, that my meeting you may have more of the appearance of Chance than Design. But what will this Complaisance, which you exact from me, avail you? If you should give the least Hint of the Tenderneſs you have for me, after the Charge I have given you to the contrary, our Converſation muſt not be long; and if you are ſilent in that Affair, as you have promiſed to be in your Letter, what will you ſay to me? You intreat me, in Terms ſo full of Gallantry and Reſpect, the liberty of entertaining me for a quarter of an hour, and make ſo many Aſſeverations, that not one word ſhall eſcape you, which can give offence to the moſt rigid Virtue; that I cannot think myſelf obliged by mine to reſuſe you ſo ſmall a ſatiſfaction; but take care how you make an ill uſe of my, perhaps, too eaſy Grant, nor hope this Interview will produce a ſecond: it would be unjuſt in you to deſire the Conſideration I have for you ſhould make me forget what I owe to my own Honour; and I am not ignorant, that my coming into thoſe meaſures, which you have taken to perſuade me to this meeting, is a Condeſcenſion which renders me unworthy your Eſteem. Believe me, when I look into my Heart,

and

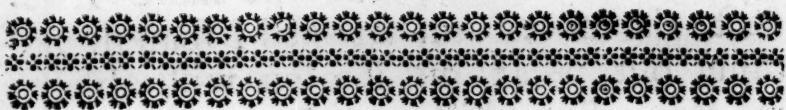
and find a Tenderness there, which I know not how to excuse. I think on you with regret; nay, I even hate you for inspiring me with Sentiments so contrary to what I ought to entertain. But, I once more desire to know to what end is this meeting to-night, you have nothing to say to me which you might not trust in a Letter; or if you had, I assure you the Person I bring with me is much less to be confided in: it is not however my *Imprudence*, but my *Reason*, which obliges me to make choice of a Woman of this Character for my Companion, in an Adventure which, I am resolved, shall not terminate to the Disadvantage of my Honour. 'Tis not enough that *nothing of what you say to me* shall be known to the World, without I also can say to myself, *I have heard nothing*, which, if known, would give me Pain.——Heavens! how heroick do I fancy myself this moment!——and yet I am not sure, in spite of all my Caution, that I have nothing to fear from this Encounter——However, I will not disappoint you on the Conditions I have named——but I cannot forbear telling you, that I almost despair to find your *Tongue* less passionate than your *Pen*: No words were ever more full of Love, than those in which you promised me to speak no more of Love; and in the assuring me, you would conceal your

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Tenderness, you have expressed so much, that I can scarce believe 'tis in your power to restrain your Eyes (if you can your Tongue) from speaking more than I would have any one but myself be witness of. But what do you think I have done with that moving—that transporting Letter I received this morning?—I have burnt it;—yes, I have had Command enough over my Inclinations to commit it to the flames.—But while it consumed, methought my Heart consumed with it, and my *Soul* languished in severer Tortures than my *Body* could, if plunged in that Fire to which I condemned the insensible Paper.—I trembled, with an apprehension, that I might have forgot something in it: and yet there was not one engaging Syllable that I had not read over a thousand and a thousand times, before I could resolve to put it out of my power to read it any more.—Interpret, as you please, this little Delicacy—Call it Good-nature—Gratitude—Love—but expect no other Testimonies of it than those I now grant you—I have already told you, and I shall always continue to tell you, that I consent to have the highest Esteem, the most tender Regard, and the sincerest Friendship imaginable for you; but nothing further.—I see so vast a Disproportion between your Merit, and that of
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any other Man, that I can look on the Difference I pay you no otherwise than the Effect of my Reason; and the more I reflect, the more I am satisfied I shall do nothing but what my Reason will absolve me for—But whither am I running?—I have writ a whole Sheet of Paper, only to tell you, I will meet you to-night in the *Tuilleries*——How is it possible I could speak so much on so trifling a Subject? But it is to you I speak, and I cannot give you a better Excuse——I will stay till five, to know how you approve of the Person I bring with me; and if I hear nothing to the contrary from you, I shall take your Silence for Assent. Once more I remind you, that if you hope ever to see me after this night, you must put a Constraint on every Look as well as Word——And to make you easy under a Task, which I believe not a little difficult, be assured I shall put the kindest Construction on your seeming Coldness, and say to my own Heart all you would wish to have it know. —Adieu! My Paper now obliges me, against my Inclination, to give over; and I can only tell you, that I am, if not so much yours as you desire, more yours than I know how to answer to my-self.



LETTER III.

 F I am not mistaken, I yesterday intreated you to write to me no more ; but if I did not, I send this only to conjure you to find no pretence ever to write to me again. I have just now found your Letter, which you conveyed into the Sleeve of my Gown—I have read it, and find it so respectful, so tender, and withal so passionate, that I no longer dare trust myself to reflect upon it.——Ah! what pity to burn so sweet, so ravishing a Testimony of Affection——yet I must do it, tho with a regret which I cannot applaud—What would become of me should I receive any more such Letters? And what Resolution shall I be able to form against a Passion so full of Merit, so full of Charms?—I say a *Passion* ; for 'tis impossible to read what you have writ, without believing you inspired by the most elegant one that ever was,

was. But suppose I could bring my-self to imagine, that Soul-enchanting Softness of your Style was wholly owing to your *Wit*, and *Love* had the least share in dictating your Expressions, what should I be the better? When, from what Source soever they spring, I cannot but be charmed? And, since either way I must be vanquished, why should I be my own Tormentor, by endeavouring to persuade my-self a *Show* of Love has caught me, when I, with equal Reason, and much, Oh! much more Pleasure, may gild my Chain with the sweet hopes of dear *Reality*?—Yet, if you are sincere, what have you to expect but *Misery* and *Despair*?—If not, what Injury have I committed against you, that you should feign a fondness to undo me?—How dearly have I paid for the Constraint I laid you under in the *Tuilleries*? And how much more dangerous is it for my Honour and my Peace that I should *read* than *bear* you?—You will tell me, that you kept the Promise you made me, and that not one Syllable of amorous Conversation slipped from your Lips—But what of that, when by that meeting you found means to convey your Sentiments, unperceived by me, in a more sure, more touching manner to my Heart—Nothing ever was so ardent, nothing so tender and so insinuating as what that Letter contained—

For

For Heaven's sake, and for the sake of my eternal Happiness, move me no more in such resistless Terms. If you can take as much pleasure in *loving* me, as I do in the not *hating* you, fix the Satisfaction of us both—Let us remain as we are—let me continue to deserve your Love, and by your not engaging me to any thing that may render me unworthy your Esteem, oblige me not to hate you. Believe me, a distant Conversation, if it is less sweet, will be, not only more pure, but also more durable. I think you seemed to express a desire to know, if I felt not some little Concern for being in a Condition incapable of making you those Returns your Passion might else have hoped; and I never told you that I did not: but I now say more—tho there is all the appearance in the World that I am not unhappy—My Husband has the greatest Tenderness for me—and, I think, I have also for him—but, in spite of all the seeming Blessings I possess, I know nothing less resembles *Love* than *Duty*.—— Burn my Letters, I conjure you, as I burn yours, and prevent all possibility of whatever passes between us being known to the World—And, if you must—if you will (in spite of all my Intreaties to the contrary) continue to write to me, you will find a Bit of Paper, inclosed in this, which will direct

rect you how I may receive your Letters
 with more Security, than if sent to our
 House: for tho your Servant has taken an
 imaginable Caution in the Delivery of
 them, and has hitherto been seen by none,
 who have had Cunning or Curiosity enough
 to pry into the Reasons of his coming; yet
 I have a Chambermaid, who is a little re-
 lated to my Husband, and if she should
 ever happen to see him, the Visit would
 give her sufficient occasion of Suspicion:
 She wants neither Wit, nor Ill-nature, and
 if any Opportunity should arrive, by which
 she might revenge some little Unkindness
 she thinks I have treated her with, she
 would not fail to take hold of it. The
 Woman, who used to receive your Let-
 ters, has always been very careful in the
 Delivery of them; but yet I would not put
 my-self in the power of any one in the
 world. I shall be infinitely more at ease,
 if, for the future, you follow my Direc-
 tions, and making the Superscription to an-
 other, deceive even the very Person from
 whose hands I take them. I wish also, if
 it were possible (behold my Extravagance!)
 that you knew not yourself to whom you
 were writing, and yet I should be distracted
 if I thought you could write to any other
 in the manner you do to me—But setting
 aside these little Foibles in my Nature,
 which I know not how to term, and much
 less

less how to excuse, the greatest Proof you can give me (I was going to say of your *Love*, but as I write without Reflection, if an improper word escapes me, have not the worse Opinion of my meaning, which never shall exceed the bounds of Honour, but believe my Pen runs faster than my Thoughts :) The greatest Proof, I say, that you can give me of a true and perfect *Friendship*, is to have the same regard for my Reputation as you would for your own, and never to endeavour to destroy a *Virtue*, which I, perhaps, too much have put into your power: Love me, I will not say as you would love a *Sister*, there's something in that Name too cold, too flat for my Desires——Nor do I say as you would love a *Wife*, that dull and formal Tye suits me yet worse——But as something which touches upon both, and yet is far transcending both——I will tell you in what manner I wish to be beloved, as part of your-self, as your own Soul; for then you will not oblige me to any thing, which I shall have occasion to repent. I am convinced *you* would be guilty of nothing which should deserve Reproach; and wish you would have the same regard for me. I am sensible I speak to you in a manner very different from what most of my Sex would do; but why are you so exactly careful in all your Letters, to avoid men

you mentioning the *Name* of *Love*, when
 your their whole Purport is to persuade me to
 n, if it, it would be ridiculous in me not to seem
 t the to understand you: Yes, I but too well
 a ne. know all you would *say*, and I therefore
 hour, answer you all I design to *do*. It is not
 my for my Sex to receive the Laws of yours,
 say, but rather to impose them; but do not
 per. be alarmed, I shall impose nothing which
 gard will appear rigorous, when you consult
 your your *Reason*, whatever it may do to your
 roy a *Passion*: Love me as I ought to be loved,
 have and I consent never to hate you.



Written in a little Piece of Paper inclosed.

*Direct your Letters for Mademoiselle * * *,
 at Madam * * *, in * * Street, over a-
 gainst the little Door of S * *. I shall con-
 stantly receive them before Noon; and if you
 have not an Answer the same Day, it shall not
 be my fault: be careful of this Paper, as you
 would of her who sends it. Remember me,
 love me, and obey me. Adieu.*





LETTER IV.

I Am not yet fully recovered from the Confusion your Presence, last night at Supper, gave me. Heavens! into what Astonishment was I cast, at seeing you in a Place where I so little expected you? I could not presently believe I was awake, and might much more easily have been persuaded to think I beheld a Vision, than the real Person of my too lovely Friend——How came you to know my Husband made an Entertainment?——And how happened it that you were at the House of the invited Guest?—Have the Goodness to satisfy me in all on your Part, and, in requital, I will inform you that myself have also been an Accomplice, tho an innocent one, in your Temerity. My Husband telling me, that Monsieur *de P*—— excused coming to our House, because that night he was to give a Supper,

Supper, at his own, to a particular Friend, I found myself obliged by, I know not what Impressment (for Heaven knows I was far from imagining you to be the Person) to engage him to renew the Invitation; and assure *Monsieur*, that the Company of that Friend would add to the Pleasure of the Entertainment.——He assented to this Proposal——what followed, you are not ignorant of; he came, and brought with him a Person, who, tho never absent from my mind, in that Company I was entirely unprepared to receive——How ought I to chide you, for not acquainting me with your Design! for I am certain it was not *Chance* which brought you hither. A *Billet* of three Lines might have prevented my Surprise, and put me on my guard against those first Emotions, which were like enough to have made Discoveries fatal to my Honour and my Peace——I know you will tell me, that you forbore letting me into the Secret of your Contrivance, out of a fear that I should have opposed it: Perhaps indeed my Reason might have advised me to do so; but I much doubt my Heart would not have permitted me to obey such Dictates——Oh that you would deal with me, in all things, with the same Plainness and Sincerity that I do with you; but your concealing *this*, alarms me with an Apprehension, that you may

conceal *others* also; and the Disquiets which you gave me yesterday, are succeeded by others to-day, which torment me not less—How am I assured you have not made Monsieur *de P*—— a Confidant in an Affair, which I had much rather you would forget yourself——’Tis possible, that this very Testimony I now give you of my Weakness, may be the Theme of your Discourse when next you see him—— Good God! if you should be guilty of so great an Indiscretion, how miserable must I be? My Honour, my Reputation are at stake, and I know not if I should not be more wretched, in the Thoughts they suffered by your Mismanagement, than even the Loss of them, valuable as they are, could make me. In a Correspondence such as ours, to take away the *Mystery*, is to take away the *Merit*; and, I hope, I have done nothing since the beginning of our Friendship, which could give you any just Occasion to desire a Breach of it.—Tell me then—I conjure you, by all your Protestations of eternal Secrecy and Truth, if you have never trusted the dear—the dangerous Secret of your Tenderness for me to other Ears but mine—I ask no other Security than your word; you have no cause to question my Willingness to believe you, and I am sure you are too generous to take advantage of my easy Faith,

Faith, or abuse the Confidence of a Wo-
 man, who assists you to deceive herself:
 Satisfy me in this, and I pardon you the
 Confusion you gave me; nay, will confess
 that I find no reason you should be at the
 pains of an Excuse——I begin to think
 the Pleasure you took in surprizing me,
 was an Effect of your Love; and to speak
 ingenuously, I *accuse* you not, but for the
 pleasure of *justifying* you——Good Hea-
 ven! how do you take up all my Soul!——
 notwithstanding I had so much Company
 last night, I saw none but you, spoke to
 none but you, and could think of nothing
 but you——I placed myself over against
 you, to bless my Sight with that delight-
 ful Prospect; but whenever my Eyes met
 yours, a guilty Joy, mixed with a Shame
 and Terror, at once invaded me, and I, at
 last, dare look no more; for fear, conscious
 of what passed within, my Blushes, or
 my Tremblings, should betray me? Judge
 what I felt in so violent a Constraint——
 in vain I flattered myself, that when Sup-
 per was done, and I had liberty to change
 my Place, I should get over my Disorder——
 Alas! it was easy for me to remove my
Body, but impossible to banish the Anxiety
 of my *Mind*; the more time I had to re-
 flect, the more I was tormented and con-
 founded; to my other Inquietudes, I had
 that of *Jealousy* added. When I found
 my-



myself separated from you, was at another Table, and obliged to play with other Company, I thought nothing could have given me a more sensible Chagrin; but when I turned my Head, and hoped to steal a Look from you, unperceived by those who were near me, and saw you busily engaged at Ombre with Ladies, whom, I confess, I cannot like you should converse with, because they indeed are too amiable——Oh! what a Torrent of unruly Passion overwhelmed my Soul! I play'd I know not how, lost my Money, quarrelled with my Companions, curs'd my Ill-fortune; and the Cards running against me, as well they might, served me for a Pretence to conceal the real Cause of my Uneasiness. My Husband, always obliging, perceiving I was weary of play, took my place: But, good God! how little did that contribute to my Tranquillity, I then had opportunity to observe you more—I saw you, with too much Tendernefs in your Eyes, regard the Ladies you were with—I heard you talk to them—heard you laugh—discovered so much ungrateful Gaiety in your Countenance, that my Heart no longer could forbear believing you inconstant, deceitful, and perfidious. Can it be possible, said I to myself, that after all the pains he has taken to convince me he had a true and perfect Passion for me, he should behave

behave himself in this manner! Can he
 wear all that Softness in his Eyes, and I
 not there?—Can his words flow with that
 harmonious Sweetness, when addressed to
 other Women?—Can he be thus composed,
 thus pleased, thus gay, when he, too well,
 must know the Agitations, the inexpressi-
 ble Inquietudes which torture me?—How
 despicable did this Consideration make me
 appear to my-self?—How did I then con-
 demn my easy Faith? how exclaim against
 your Falshood?—In fine, I suffered for
 some moments all that Distraction could in-
 flict—The Violence of my Pain too well
 convinced me of the Greatness of *my Pas-*
son; but, Oh my charming Conqueror!—
 was it a Proof of *yours* to give it me?—
 Could any one that loved, thus torture
 what he loved?—You omitted nothing
 indeed, the whole night, which belonged
 to the Man of Breeding; all your Beha-
 viour expressed the *fine Gentleman*, but so
 artfully concealed *the Lover*, that 'tis no
 wonder an impatient jealous Soul, like
 mine, should doubt if you *are* so. My
 Husband is entirely charmed with your
 Conversation, and thinks himself under a
 perpetual Obligation to Monsieur *de P*—,
 for bringing him acquainted with you—
 (Alas! how easy are the Innocent deceived,
 and what an Alteration would it make in
 his Sentiments, should he ever discover the
 Correspon-

Correspondence we have had !) Manage with Discretion the beginning of this Friendship, and, if you continue to desire it, we may have many Opportunities of Conversation without Suspicion. I remember you spoke of an Entertainment you designed to make next Thursday; and, in the midst of my Disquiets, I flatter my-self with a Belief, it is only for my sake: but nothing can more assure me it is so, than your complying with my Request to change that day for St. *John's*, because you bear that Name; and where there is a real Tenderness, every little Trifle gives a Pleasure, else why should those Letters, which compose the name of *John*, be so much more preferable than the rest of the Alphabet to my Ears !—Judge favourably of my Extravagance, for what is it Love is not capable of inspiring. *Adieu.*



LETTER V.

 S you have obliged me in the Assu-
 rance that our Conversation, inno-
cent as it is, is only known to our-
selves; I think I can do no less in return,
than give you my Promise of being easy
for the future: Nay, so entirely do I de-
pend on what you say, that even in this
Point, which sticks so closely to my Soul,
my Reputation, I did not hesitate one mo-
ment whether I should believe you. I have
the same Impatience which you have, and
perhaps much more——Perhaps, did I
say? much more, without doubt, for the
Approach of dear To-morrow, which will
bring us to each other's Presence: But,
good God! with how many Disquiets must
I purchase the pleasure of seeing you?——
yet pardon me, when I say it is a kind of
Consolation to me, that you, in some mea-
sure, will be Partaker of my Chagrin——

d

My

My Husband will be with us!—Oh disagreeable!—no room to speak one soft, one tender word——no Opportunity even for one kind Glance——What Constraint must both of us endure?——But this is not all; my Reason, ingenious in tormenting me, has found another Obstacle——You cannot handsomely dispense with not inviting your Friend Monsieur de P——to your Entertainment and certainly, next to you, he has the most Wit and Penetration of any Man I know. I dread his Discernment, and fear his Curiosity more even than my Husband's: if any part of that Tenderness you profess for me be real, set a Guard on all your Actions before him;——but I less suspect your Artifice than my own——Oh that I better could disguise my Thoughts——Is it because *our Sex* is the weaker, or because *yours* is less sensible, that the Wishes of our Souls are more easily discovered? I fear the latter is the true Cause, and that the Reason why it is no difficult Task for you to *conceal* a Passion, is, that when you please you know how to *vanquish* it. Would to God I could be so much the Mistress of my Inclinations,——how happy should I be to love you less! For tho, I confess there is not a *Man* on Earth so worthy to be loved as you, yet I am certain that there is not a *Woman* on Earth who ought to love you

you less—How unhappy my Condition is,
 I leave to your own Heart to judge; and
 if I am as dear to you, as you would per-
 suade me to believe, you would wish there
 were a possibility for me to regain my
 Peace, tho at the expence of that Friend-
 ship you have taken so much pains to fix—
 What shall I say? 'tis dangerous to see, to
 hear, to read you, yet in that Employment
 lies my only Happiness—I take no plea-
 sure but in reflecting on you, and yet the
 more I think, the more I am undone:—
 In spite of all the Fears, the Terrors which
 invade me in your Presence, I burn with
 Impatience to be with you again—I
 languish when I see you, but when I see
 you *not*, I die.—This is the true State of
 my Heart, and I endure far more than 'tis
 possible for me to express; but when I
 consider 'tis for *you* that I endure it, me-
 thinks there's something glorious in my
 sufferings, and I prefer an Agitation, so
 meritorious, to a Tranquillity stupid and
 insipid——To know, and not to admire
 you, were an Affront to my Understanding,
 —not to acknowledge it, would injure my
 Sincerity—not to return your Friendship,
 would render me unworthy of it: and sure
 when *Friendship* such as ours, elevated to
 that high degree on both sides, known, con-
 fessed, believed, returned, it wants not
 much of *Love*. Burn my Letters, I in-
 treat

treat you, but I wish not you should forget their meaning; for notwithstanding all the Efforts I have made to drive you from taking too great a possession of my Soul, you are, you will be all I think on—— Dream on——wish for, and I would not have you less unhappy than myself in this Particular—but, tell me, (my triumphant Charmer!)——would you not think me vain, and too much influenced by the Follies of my Sex, if I should imagine there was so great a Sympathy between us, as to make you a Sharer in all those Pains I feel when separated from you? May I believe *your* Heart capable of those Emotions, which agitate *mine* with so much Vehemence? If I may, there is now an Opportunity, the most favourable in the World, for both our Wishes. My Husband knows not at what Hour he is to attend you to-morrow; you may make that an Excuse to visit him this Evening, he will rejoice in the favour you do him, and without doubt will intreat you to sup with us, and I flatter myself you will, for my sake, so far oblige him. I shall be much more happy in your Company this night, than I was the last; not only because I am prepared for your Reception, but also that Monsieur *de P*—— will not be with us. Behold the Perfidy I am guilty of to a Husband, the most deserting in the World, to make him servicable

viceable in procuring me a pleasure so in-
 jurious to himself; my Reason, my Pru-
 dence, my Honour, my Duty are *against*,
 but are not forcible enough to *prevent* the
 liberty I take in favour of my Passion—
 Do *you* then contradict me—'tis in *your*
 power alone to stop the boundless Progress
 of my headstrong Wishes, as much as I de-
 test to be controlled; if you do not, per-
 haps, I shall detest you more—'Tis a ri-
 diculous Objection to say, my Husband
 will be a Witness of all we do, my Virtue
 without him were a sufficient Security;
 my Peace of Mind is lost—my Reputa-
 tion is endangered, and my Faith violated
 by your too powerful Merit and my own
 Sensibility—I am ruined if I go on in
 this wild Course of Passion; (yet cruel, love-
 ly Friend!) you'll not restrain me—How
 much ought I to hate myself, for entering
 into a Conversation which, I might well
 believe, I should not have the power to
 break off—I loved from the first moment I
 beheld you—and should I not have shunned
 you?—I was charmed with the Gra-
 ces of your Person, and yet I still looked
 on—I was transported with your Wit,
 and yet I listened to it—I was ravished
 with the enchanting Style of your Letters,
 and yet I encouraged you to write—I
 opened every Sense to take in your Perfec-
 tions, till all my Soul was full of them, and
 I

I have now no room for any other Thought; but to what end is this recital, you know much more than I can say! My *Actions* are greater, and more perfect Testimonies of what you have inspired me with, than *Words* can be—The meeting you in the *Tuilleries*, at your desire—my Permission to write to me—the Pleasure with which I receive your Letters—the Regret with which I burn them—the Disquiets I suffered in seeing you with other Women—the Trouble with which I part with you—the Impatience I have to see you again—in fine, every thing I do, lets you into the Secret of my Heart—You *know*, I love—but Oh! not all I do, nor all I say, can ever make you sensible how *much*—not even your own Imagination, extensive as it is, can comprehend how dear, how very dear you are to my admiring Soul!—But, in the name of God, content yourself with this, nor suffer that Weakness, which we equally are guilty of, to triumph over our Reason! — Still let Virtue bear the Sway, and if we cannot vanquish Inclination, let it not vanquish us. Adieu! I hear my Husband's Voice, and the bare Apprehension of being surprized in an Employment I so ill could answer, makes me tremble.

POST

P O S T S C R I P T.

It is now just three a-clock; if you are so far engaged, that I cannot hope to see you this Evening, let me know it by five at farthest, else at six I shall expect you: Come rather half an hour before the time, than stay a moment after it. I give you leave to make the kindest Interpretation of my Impatience.

A BILLET sent two hours after the foregoing Letter.

I Had no sooner received your obliging Billet, which brought me the welcome Assurance of seeing you to-night; but my Husband came into my Chamber to acquaint me, that Monsieur *de Crequy* had engaged him to accompany him to the *Hotel de Ville*, and that Madam L——, and other Ladies, would take no Denial from me—How on a sudden were all my pleasing Expectations crossed?—My imaginary Felicity turned to a State of real Wretchedness—I protest (my charming, my too dear Friend) this Message sounded like a Clap of Thunder to my Ears, but there's no avoiding the cruel Summons—I must attend

attend this insipid Company, and leave all the Happiness that Light or Life can give—Depend upon it, my Soul will be with you; and tho' this curs'd Formality confines my Body, all my Thoughts are yours; and I should be inconsolable, under this Misfortune, if it were not for the hopes to-morrow's Joys would make a full amends for the Disappointment of to-night—Come in the morning, perhaps, my Husband, so much charmed as he is with you, may be Gallant enough to press you to go in our Coach to the Place where you make your Entertainment; if so, I doubt not but you will accept it, for the pleasure you will give me in it.—Farewel. I have time to say no more—dream of me—think of me as I do of you——but that's impossible.


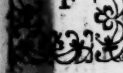


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LETTER VI.

Written at Midnight.

 ATIGUED with the Magnifi-
 cence of the Day, and overcome
 with the Richness and Variety of
 your Wines, my Husband is in so sound a
 Sleep, that, I believe, the loudest Trum-
 pets in his Ear would not have the power
 to awake him——In what a blessed State
 of Tranquillity is he! neither Love, nor
 Jealousy, disturb his Rest——And how
 fortunate is it for me (since I have so much
 cause for my Chagrin) that his unusual
 Lethargy has given me an Opportunity of
 lying in another Chamber, where, unper-
 ceived, I may give a loose to all the In-
 quietudes which perplex me——Yes, lovely
 Tyrant! yes, notwithstanding the many
 T. proofs I have already given you of my
 Love, and the little Reason I now have to
 e continue

continue in that mind, I cannot restrain myself from giving you yet more——nor do I know if all I have done be so great a Testimony of my Passion, as the Rage, the Jealousy, the Despair which now possesses me——After my Return from the Visit I was yesterday obliged to make, I spent the best part of the night in my ordinary Agitations (Ingrateful! you are too well assured who 'twas that caused them) but at last a drowzy Heaviness (it could not be called Rest) overpowered my Senses; but while I slept, the Eye of Fancy waked, and a thousand indistinct Ideas skim'd along before me—those I remember not, till, at the approach of Day, a Time they say when vain Illusions fly, I had a Dream of too much sad Presage to be forgotten——I have never been guilty, like most of my Sex, of giving Faith to those visionary Oracles; and if I now do, you ought not to despise me for it, since where they bear so perfect a resemblance of Truth as mine did, it would rather be an imprudent *Obstinacy* to reject, than an idle *Superstition* to regard them. Methought I was in *Luxemburgh-Garden*, where I beheld the finest little Spaniel I ever saw, the Ear of it hung down to the Ground, and it was marked, with so exact a Symmetry with small black Spots, that it seemed more the Workmanship of *Art* than *Nature*.
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Pleased with the uncommon Beauty of the Creature, I took it up, began to stroke it, and play with it, and endeavoured, by all the ways I could, to make it fond of me; but it seemed uneasy at finding itself confined, and would fain have escaped from me. I offered it Bisquit and Sweetmeats, it refused them; and when I opened its Mouth, and would have forced it to swallow something, it flew out of my Arms with all the Violence imaginable; and being got a good distance off, made a strange sort of a Noise, I know not how to describe, between a Howl and a Bark; and when that ceased, with Accents resembling human, *Your Kindness is dangerous,* it cry'd, *and may drive us both to Distraction.* Then running swiftly to a Woman, who sat at the further end of the Walk, and which, as near as I can remember, had the appearance of Mademoiselle de—, it jumped into her Lap, and both together vanished. The Terror I was in, immediately waked me; I rejoiced to find it but a Dream: but tho I was then far from being able to make any just Interpretation of its meaning, I could not help thinking it bore some ill Presage; and it was the Melancholy, that Reflection occasioned, which you observed in my Countenance, and took notice of to me when you led me to my Coach. However, I

could not long retain it in your Company: Bless'd in your Sight, I lost all thoughts but Love; and if I could not be so happy in your Conversation as I *wished*, by reason of my Husband and your Friend Monsieur *de P*——, yet I was as happy as I could *expect*, the whole time of our little Journey to *Vincennes*——Oh! that it had been longer! too soon, alas! the short-liv'd Pleasure ceased——When we arrived, and the next Coach to ours brought Mademoiselle *de* ——, and her Daughter, good Heaven! with how much Transport did you gaze upon her?——Your Eyes were rivetted, and moved but as she turned——whene'er you spoke to her, it was with so much Alteration in your Voice, as manifested but too plainly the pleasure you took in entertaining her; and what chagrin'd me more, I saw she observed the unusual Ceremony you treated her with, and triumphed in the Deference you paid her——Confusion! how the thought on't stings me——How pleased, how vain the Creature looked!——how impertinently did she talk! yet, Villain! you applauded all she said——you did——and, by all the manner of your Behaviour to her, sufficiently made it plain to the whole Company, you had no Consideration but of her——I saw it, 'twas too, too visible to all, but much more so to jealous Love——I saw

that

that Heart, which to secure I had forfeited
 my Duty, my Reputation, and my eter-
 nal Quiet, devoted to another—I found
 the Entertainment, which, I flattered my-
 self, was designed only for my sake, was
 made in honour of a Rival——Oh Tor-
 ture !——Curse on the Occasion which
 brought me into your Presence!——Curse
 on the Day in which I first beheld you——
 but doubly curs'd be that detested Hour in
 which I listen'd to your perjured Vows——
 Compare now (if you can lose so much
 time from your new Passion) the Incidents
 of my Dream with those of Reality, and be
 just enough to confess yourself ungrateful
 and unconstant——I do not deny but
 my Rival has Charms ; she is handsome,
 young, gay, and—perhaps—in every thing
 surpasses me ; I plead no Merit but my
 Love : But whatever my other Deficiencies
 may be, you have *sworn* yourself my ever-
 lasting Votary, and I have had the Weak-
 ness to *believe* you——Wretch that I am !
 ——I have *indeed* confided in you to my
 Ruin, and yet, now I find myself betrayed
 and wronged (shameful Confession !) I
 have not Resolution to despise you——
 No, cruel, inhuman as you are, I can-
 not hate you——cannot love you less than
 I have done——That Tenderness, which
 my Opinion of your Desert created, is
 wound about my Heart, so closely twisted
 with

with the Strings of Life, that, till they break, I ne'er can shake it off—Ah! how *severely* just is Heaven, to punish, with such sad Despair, the first, the only Weakness of this kind I ever have been guilty of! Had any *other* been inflicted on me, I could have borne it patiently, and, sheltered beneath the Wings of *Love*, defy'd the worst of Fate; nay, bless'd my State, if ne'er so wretched, if secure of *you*—Have I preserved my Virtue, endured the Strugglings of tempestuous Passion, resisted Nature, and your endearing Pleadings, done more than ever Woman did to make me worthy your Esteem, and must I lose it thus?—Is it possible a Woman you have seen but twice (for I think that unfortunate day my Husband made his Entertainment was the first) should gain so entire a possession of your Soul, that for *her* sake you chuse to sacrifice a Passion such as *mine*? Is her Beauty, or her Wit, suppose them both superior to mine, a sufficient Counterballance for the Merit of my Love? She is ignorant of half your Excellencies, nor has Solidity enough to weigh them as she ought; she does not—cannot love like me—What have I said?—how vain is such a Thought!—*Not love like me!*—Why should she not? Has she not Eyes?—not Ears?—Have you not Perfections easily distinguished?—Yes, you both are equally enamour'd! To

are divinely charming!—*she* susceptible!—*You* have made known your Love!—*she* listens—*Your* Quality may *claim*!—*her* Fortune may *deserve*!—All things conspire against me—my Ruin is determined! my Dream is true. Oh! that I could cease to think—to live—to be.—Distraction!—Death!—Hell yields not half my Tortures!— I conjure you, not by your Love to me (for that you, by your yesterday's Behaviour, have renounced, and with it Heaven, which you so oft have called a witness to your faithless Imprecations) but by the Tyes of common Gratitude, of Humanity, and Good-nature, to write to me once more—Let me at least know *why* I am forsaken—let me but know in *what* my Rival merits more than I, and I'll forgive your Perjuries, and trouble you no more with my Reproaches—Oh God!—I need not promise that—whene'er the cruel Certainty arrives, that I, *indeed*, have lost you, those few short Syllables conclude, at once my Life, my Love, and my Despair, and your own Conscience will be your only Monitor—See! not content to pass the *Night* in mortal Agitations, the *Day* has found me in them— if I do not hear from you before I am obliged to receive Company, it will be in vain for me to endeavour to conceal my Disorders; they are too violent—too terrible

rible to be dissembled——nor will those, occasioned by such Injuries as mine, admit of Artifice——Farewel, thou most wavering, falsest, but still most dear of all thy treacherous Sex: my Tears prevent my saying any more, than that I must love you always.

P O S T S C R I P T.

A N S W E R me immediately, I beg you, by all that in this World is dear to you: I have contrived that you shall receive it about the hour, I have heard you say, you generally rise; I would not disturb you sooner, tho I have little reason to consult the Repose of a Man, who takes a pleasure in destroying mine; and who, after having made me pass the Night in so cruel a Distraction, is himself, perhaps, employed in pleasing Dreams of his new Conquest: The greatest favour you can do me, next to your speedy Reply, is to burn this; and whatever Occasion I have given you to ridicule my Weakness, be not ungenerous enough to expose me to the malicious Insults of a triumphant happy *Rival*——Once more adieu——pity at least the Condition you have reduced me to; but let not *Good-Nature* so far prevail above *Sincerity*, as to oblige you to feign a Tendernefs you no longer are capable of feeling.

L E T.

LETTER VII.

YOU have reason, my everlasting
 Charmer!—my Soul's Adored!
 my most transporting!—(I know
 not by what name to call you, for you are
 far more dear to me than all this World
 calls precious) you have reason to be sur-
 prized at the Distraction of my last night's
 Letter! But what is it a Woman, posses-
 sed at once with Love and Jealousy, is not
 capable of doing? Notwithstanding the
 haste you made to rid me of my Inqui-
 etudes, I thought it too long, I was impa-
 tient for your Answer, even before there
 was a possibility of your receiving mine,
 and look'd on your Delay as a new Proof
 of your Indifference: The extreme Vio-
 lence of the two most furious Passions Hu-
 man Nature is capable of feeling, had al-
 most tempted me to seek you—Yes, I was
 f coming,

coming, in Person, to upbraid you—to
 rage—revile—to say I know not what—
 and give a Loose to all the Tempest of my
 Soul: Nor were, in those disordered mo-
 ments, my Honour, or my Reputation, of
 sufficient force to have withheld me—
 nothing, but the Consideration how much
 so indiscreet an Action would have ren-
 dered me unworthy your Esteem, could
 have restrained me, till your dear Letter
 blessed my longing Eyes, and with its kind,
 its ravishing Contents, reversed my Senti-
 ments, and restored me to my Hopes. Is
 it then possible the Devoirs you paid to
 Mademoiselle *de* ——— were only the
 Effects of Gallantry? And will you be so
 divinely good, to keep the Promise you
 have made me, of seeing her no more?—
 Am I worthy of so remarkable a Testimo-
 ny of your Constancy? Great God! how
 glorious is my present State?—And how
 richly am I paid for the Sacrifice I have
 made you of my Peace!—To suffer by
 you, would be Hell; but to suffer for
 you, is Heaven: and while you continue
 to love me, I never can repent my Con-
 descensions——How unjust, therefore,
 is it in you to accuse me of Insensibility?
 What mean you by telling me that I am
 ignorant of the Violence of your Passion?
 It cannot burn with so much fierceness in
 your Heart, but that what I feel in mine
 would

would make me capable of conceiving it—
 I have already said, and now again confirm it, that never Woman lov'd to that degree I do; and there is nothing, which Virtue will permit, I would deny, to prove the Sincerity of my words—Alas! did I say I *would*?—I mean, I *have* deny'd you nothing, but that which you never must expect, and which—perhaps—I think myself as wretched in *refusing*, as you can in being *refused*—To suspect my Tendernefs is the only way to diminish it, and when you press me for further Marks of it, it puts me on Reflection how many you have received; and instead of obliging me to do more, makes me look back, with shame, on what I have already done: Think gratefully on the *past*, and you will not be unreasonable enough to ask more for the *future*, than the Continuance of the *present*—Is it not sufficient that you have not only made a Conquest over my Heart, my Soul, and all the Faculties of it; but brought me to *confess* how much you are my Conqueror—What would you more?—There's nothing but *unguarded* Virtue stands against you, and—will you not take advantage of my Weakness, if I should tell you, 'tis only the most refin'd Sublimity of Passion, which enables me to hold even the last proof 'tis in my power to give how much I am yours?—Were

you less dear to me, I less should fear to lose you——Let me then——let me, I conjure you, still preserve my Honour, for *that* once violated, I were, indeed, deserv- less; and, Oh! you cannot *love* me long when I no more am worthy your *Esteem*. Now, if you forsake me, I shall, at least have this Consolation, that your *Levity*, not my *Ill-Conduct*, has undone me——I will then, if 'tis possible for me to do so still retain the only Quality which makes me appear truly amiable——You never shall have *Reason* to despise me! and if you are not content with the Disquiets I *have*——*I do*, and, while I have Life, *must* suffer for your sake; load me yet with more, expose me, if you please, suffer my Let- ters, which I suspect, in spite of my re- peated Intreaties, you have not burned, to come in publick Testimonies against me——And what's more terrible than all, before my Face, protest to another all you have sworn to me——Do all you can——even more than I can fear——a secret Joy would make my Woes sit easy, when I reflect how little I merited such Treatment; and, that if I could not help loving the most excellent, the most transporting of Man- kind, I yet had strength enough of Virtue unaided as it is, to resist my own Wishes, and his Pressures——Forbear, dear thank- less Charmer! to upbraid me with what

you

you have done for me: What have you done? besides resolving to see a Woman no more, for whom you say you have no regard.——But put the Case you have, 'tis but a new-born Inclination, at the most, you sacrifice: How much more, good Heaven! how infinitely much more are you obliged to me! who have broke through all the Ties the World calls Sacred——

Am I not *ungrateful* to hate a Husband, who loves me more than Life?——Am I not *impious*, in taking away a Heart, which both by Divine and Human Laws ought only to be his——Am I not *base*, in making him a Property, to further the criminal Conversation I enjoy with you——

Do I not suffer all the Racks of Thought which Guilt and Shame can give——And are these trifling Favours?——Lovely Encroacher! Can you expect yet more?——

Yes, I have found the Truth! I will no more suspect your Vows; I do, indeed, believe you, when you say you love me; and know too well the boundless Wishes of that Passion, and the Pangs, the burning Pangs it suffers when restrained; 'tis to procure your Ease, to restore your Heart to that Repose, Desire has robbed it of, you seek to ruin me. Distaste is always the Consequence of Vice; and when you have made me wicked, you will find it no difficulty to scorn me——Ah! how many

ny Tears does this Consideration cost me—yet it is my only Defence—Fool that I am to tell you so, but 'tis impossible to conceal any thing from you——In pity, therefore, cease to tempt me—either resolve to love me with Innocence, or I must resolve to see you no more——Oh God! how many Hells are in that word?—See you no more!——It must not—cannot be while Life remains——Yes, I must see you this very Evening at the Place you appoint ; but I *charge* you by the power, you say, I have over you—I *conjure* you by that I have given you over me, to make no ill use of an Opportunity so favourable to your Desires. Permit me to retain the charming Hope, that I *always* shall be happy in *your* Love, and, by not abusing the Confidence I put in you, prove yourself truly worthy of *mine*,

P O S T S C R I P T.

SINCE I writ this (for I had not an Opportunity of sending it immediately) I have had an Account of Mademoiselle *de L*——. You know, and so does the whole Town, she made a Sacrifice of her Honour to her Passion, in favour of Monsieur *de M*——, and the Ingratitude of his Treatment since : The Misery of her Condition now, is a sufficient warning to her
Sex ;

Sex ; and tho about three hours hence you may expect to see me, be assured I come arm'd with a Resolution becoming my Virtue and my Love.



A BILLET, written on her Return from the Appointment.

NO, Monsieur, no ; the Outrage you have done me is not of a nature to be pardoned. How wretched had I been this moment, if Fortune had not been as favourable to me, as your Inclinations were the contrary ? And how much ought I to bless Mademoiselle *de S*—— for her seasonable Interruption ?——Is it thus that you return a Passion so true, so tender, and so ardent as was mine ? And is it by such means you think to preserve the Regard of a Woman of Honour ?——But, I see my Error, in believing there was a possibility for one of your Sex to have Generosity enough to entertain any further View than the Gratification of your own Desires— Poor despicable Notion !——Base Degeneracy of Nature ! How I disdain the Heart that harbours it !——I freely now release you of the Promise you made me, and which you had the Vanity to imagine
merited

merited the highest Reward ——— Visit
 Mademoiselle *de* —, or who you please;
 I shall not envy, but pity the unhappy
 Consequences of your Addresses. I desire
 no other favour of you, than if, as 'tis not
 impossible, you boast of the Tenderness
 you have been able to inspire me with,
 you will also do me the justice to acknow-
 ledge, I retain'd it no longer than you
 continu'd worthy of it.



*A BILLET, in answer to a Letter
 of Excuse she had received from
 him.*

DO you then, unworthy and ingrateful
 as you are, pretend to justify a Design
 so injurious to my Honour? Can you ima-
 gine I have the Weakness to believe my
 rendring myself desertless of your *Respect*,
 should more endear me to your *Love*? Oh!
 no; I am not so little acquainted with the
 World, or the Temper of Mankind: And
 when you reproach me with want of Sin-
 cerity, in refusing to you, whom I pretend
 to *love*, those Favours, which Duty obliges
 me to yield to a Husband whom I *hate*; I
 must tell you, that I hate him not the
 thousandth, thousandth part so much as I
 love

love you; and that I suffer his Caresses, disagreeable as he is now become, with less regret than I should yours, all dear, all charming as you are; curs'd Apprehension would damp the Transport, reverse the Bliss, and make the Heaven of your Embrace a Hell——But all these Arguments are now too late, I find it an Impossibility to continue an innocent Correspondence with you, and must resolve entirely to break off——I send back your Letter, because I will not give myself the trouble of burning it, and the greatest Obligation you can now lay on me, is to write to me no more.



*Another BILLET, in answer to a
Second Letter, on the same Ac-
count.*

AH! good God! what fruitless Trou-
bles do you give yourself! I thought
the Billet I sent you this morning had suf-
ficiently explained my Intentions, to pre-
vent your making any further Efforts to
disturb the Tranquillity of a Repose I am
now endeavouring to regain. What Plea-
sure, lovely cruel Man, do you take in
persecuting me? Your Letters never gave

g

me


me greater Joy, than now they do Dis-
 quiet: nothing can be more tender, no-
 thing more passionate than the last you
 writ; yet nothing ever carried so little
 power of Persuasion. I have considered of
 all the Reasons you alledge for your Ex-
 cuse, and have added ten thousand more
 from my own Heart; yet can find none
 sufficient for your Justification: what more
 can I do for you?—To pardon you, and
 at the same time confess I think you un-
 worthy of it, were to encourage you to
 offend again; and to feign an Insensibility
 of the Greatness of your Crime, were an
 Affront to my Understanding—I must
 then desist all manner of Conversation with
 you—'Tis not long since that Reflection
 would have been the most dreadful one I
 could have entertained; but in the Condi-
 tion I now am, nothing can alarm me—
 I return this Letter, as I did the other,
 and, with my usual Sincerity, assure you,
 that tho, I fear, I never shall be able to
 bring myself to love you less, yet I shall
 omit nothing in my power for that pur-
 pose—Adieu—for—ever.



L E T-



LETTER VIII.


 ELL, dear Ingrateful! well, I pardon you the Injury you have done me, and promise never to reproach you for a fault, which only the Violence of your Passion made you guilty of: I can no longer resist the moving Eloquence of your Despair, and though you justly merited the Pangs you suffered, I could not see you in them, without becoming too much a Partaker not to release us both—and yet, I fear, I shall repent this sudden Change—What carry'd me yesterday to that Woman's House where you found me?—What prevented my leaving it as soon as you appeared?—Why did I give myself liberty to gaze upon those Eyes, and listen to That Tongue, which ne'er can plead in vain?—How did my Anger melt away at your Approach?—How did my Soul dissolve in Love and Tenderneſs?—

And when you first approached me, and trembling, with silent Awe, pressed to your Lips my too, too-yielding Hand, you might have read your Pardon in my Blushes — My Spirits were so much confused and hurried, betwixt a mixture of Extasy and Pain, the few moments I was with you, that 'tis no wonder, at my Return home, I should be incapable of recollecting any thing I had said to you; but by what you have writ this morning, I find my words did not absolutely contradict my Heart. Whether it was the remainder of those soft Emotions, the unexpected sight of you inspired me with, has been the Cause, or that there is something in this last Letter of yours, more tender, more persuading than the rest, I know not; but, in spite of the Tears it cost me in perusing, I find it impossible for me either to return, or burn it, as I have done the others. I keep it in my Bosom — press it to my Heart, which, while it bounds with tender Transports to meet the welcome Treasure, upbraids, in bursting Sighs, the niggard Bounty of injurious Fate, which, for *substantial*, gives but *imaginary* Joys. — Ah! why should Love like ours be term'd a Crime? — Why should Desires, agreeable as well to Reason as to Nature, be withstood? — Cruel Heaven! but why accuse I Heaven? — 'Tis the Decrees of *Man*,
not

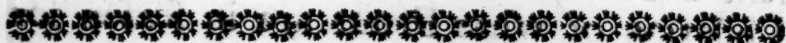
not *Heaven*, are against us:—*Man* ! undistinguishing, unthinking *Man* ! who forming Laws to bind the inconstant Vulgar, could find no means to leave the nobler Part unchained, and made Marriage a Sacrament alike to all.——Good God ! how much should I be censured by some People for expressing my Sentiments in this unguarded manner ! But I speak to one that loves me——to one who, if the Graces of his Person first made me admire him, the Conformity of his Notions since has made me doat on—to one who, I hope, will take no advantage of my Freedom, and one who has already suffered too much for his Temerity to be in danger of a Relapse—No, by my eternal Hopes, I swear, could you be capable of offending me a second time, in the manner you have done, tho I live but in the charming Contemplation of being beloved by you, tho my Soul hangs on you with a Tenderneſs almoſt unconceivable, there is no Death ſo dreadful, which I would not prefer to the ſhame of a Reconciliation with you. For pity then ſave me from the cruel neceſſity of Dying, either with Remorſe for my *own* Guilt, or Grief for *yours* ; for with the ſame Sincerity I have always uſed, I now aſſure you, that Life, in a State of Separation from you, would be a Burden I could not long ſuſtain —— I loved you, even when I
thought

thought I had the least Reason to do so; and how severe soever my Expressions might appear in those three *Billets* I sent you, my Heart still took your part, and felt Pains more sensible than any thing I writ could cause in yours.——I remember, in the Fury of my Resentment, I gave you permission to visit Mademoiselle *de*——, or any other Woman you should think worthy your Addresses. I believe I need not tell you that I resume that Grant, and what would *then* have been an inconsolable Affliction, *now* would be an unpardonable Offence. You know, besides my natural Propensity to Jealousy, I have Ambition enough to wish to engross all your moments; and those you cannot share with me, I would have you spend in contemplating me: nor do I, in demanding this, require more than an equal Return for what I give to you. But to convince you how sincerely I forgive the Error of your past Behaviour, and how much I confide in your Promise for regulating your future Conduct, I shall put it in your power to prove yourself the Man of Honour you would seem, and which, should you fail in, I am every way the most unfortunate of Women. My Husband will be all this Afternoon engaged abroad, and I have promised to pass those hours of his Absence with a Sister of his; but I know how to
make

make a better use of so happy an Opportunity, and when you have examined your own Heart, if you find yourself sufficiently Master of your Desires, to contain within the Bounds of Modesty and Virtue, I shall meet you, at the good Woman's where you found me yesterday, with all the Eagerness of transported Love. I hope to be there by four a-clock at farthest; but if you are obliged to wait a little for me, it will not be my Inclination that detains me. I have sent a Note, to order her to prepare a Collation of what Fruits are in season for our Entertainment, and that little Repast with you will be more pleasing, than the most magnificent Feast, debarred your Presence, or obliged to endure the Company of disagreeable Observators——But let us, I pray you, forget the little Divorce we have had, and the Occasion of it; you are sufficiently justified to my Soul, and as I will not *reproach*, so do not you *excuse*. I would have nothing to poison the Felicity of those blessed moments, and sure there cannot be a greater known, than when two Persons, who want not Wit, and are equally loving and beloved, enjoy the Society of each other uninterrupted. My Husband, who has been all this morning at his *Villa*, is just now returned; and having brought your Friend Monsieur *de P*—— along with him, obliges me to finish my

Letter

Letter sooner than else I should have done ; but I shall lose nothing by it, the Time I should have bestowed in writing to you, will be spent in discoursing of you. I doubt not but your good Qualities will be the only Theme all Dinner. God grant my Countenance does not betray the Disorder of my Heart—Adieu—I never write without telling you a thousand times over that I love you—but I am afraid it will be impossible for me ever to say how much—



*A BILLET, written the next
Morning in Bed.*

YOU see, my lovely Friend ! 'tis not impossible to be innocent and happy ; at least, I hope, I was not the only Person bless'd those three dear hours, in which I yesterday enjoyed your Society—Yes ; the Regret, with which you parted from me, convinces me of the pleasure you took in having me with you, tho on Terms not the most suitable to your Inclinations.—Ah ! what a glorious Conquest have I gained?—How does my Soul exult with virtuous Pleasure ? To subdue my *own* Desires, is sure praise-worthy ; but to have the power of *yours*—to stop the wild Career of untam'd Love, in the proud Heart
of

of arbitrary *Man*, is *Victory* indeed !—
 Now, I'm assur'd, you love me !—Love
 me as you ought, and if my vital *Blood*
 could pay the generous *Compliance*, I'd
 gladly shed the last dear *Drop* to prove my
Gratitude—You now are all that I
 could wish, and more, far more than I
 could hope—all excellent !—all Angel, in
 the shape of *Man* !—What did I not suf-
 fer last night (joy'd as I was in your de-
 lightful *Presence*) for fear your *Passion*
 should get the better of your *Reason* ? and
 when I permitted you to take those little
Freedoms, which neither *Honour* nor *De-*
cency could refuse, I saw the *Conflict* in
 your *Soul*, and pity'd you—Your steal-
 ing *Sighs*—your *Starts*—your *Trem-*
blings—your blushing *Cheeks*, and fiery
Eyes, confess'd the inward *Strugglings* of
 your warring *Thoughts* too plain, for me
 to suspect (as perhaps some *Women* would
 do on the like *Occasion*) that it was *Dis-*
taste, *Coldness*, or any thing but that im-
 plicite *Obedience* to my *Will*, which all,
 who would be thought to love, should pay,
 enabled you to keep the *Promise* you made
 me. Behold, how I lose myself in the
Thoughts of you, I had but one moment I
 could call my own since I came from you,
 and that I have employed in writing to you.
 My *Husband*, who rose early, in order to
 take the *Air* this morning, and has pre-
 h
 vail'd

vail'd on me to accompany him, is dress'd,
and coming into my Chamber to call me,
and I am yet in Bed——Heaven forbid
he should ever discover the Reason of my
want of Complaisance.——Farewell, I
expect to hear from you before Noon.



LET-

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LETTER IX.

¶ Receiv'd your Letter, as I do every
 ¶ thing which comes from you, with
 ¶ Raptures of unfeign'd Affection:
 But what, my Dear! my more than ever
 dangerous Charmer! can you believe I
 think of the Contents?—Sure, all the Gods
 of Love and Wit conspire to aid you, each
 striking Syllable melts my Resolves, thrills
 my transported Soul with guilty Extasies,
 and hurries every Sense——While you
 say, you always will retain the most strict
 regard for the *Preservation* of my Virtue,
 you express yourself in such a manner as
destroys it quite——My very Reason too
 now turns against me, and pointing out
 the Wonders of your Merit, applauds my
 Passion, and condemns Resistance——To
 what then shall I fly?—to Religion——
 alas! Love finds a way to reconcile even
 that, for in adoring you, I adore the Power
 h 2 which

which form'd such Excellence—the more I think, the more I am confounded, and every Argument I alledge to save me, plunges me deeper in a Sea of Fondness——Whither, Oh! whither will the Torrent drive me?—against the daring, the presumptuous Lover: *Pride* arms us for Defence; but when Despair appears, adorn'd like yours, it undermines the Fort, and baffles Force——You have found the way to wind yourself into my very Soul, robb'd me of all the means of Opposition, and, by an artful yielding, conquer!——You are become so much a part of me, that, methinks, I should have no Reserve, no separate Views——It was only the terrible Apprehensions of being slighted and abandoned by you, when I had nothing farther to bestow, has hitherto restrain'd me from granting all unbounded Love could ask; and, if those Apprehensions cease——if I'm assur'd of your eternal Gratitude and Truth, how then shall I find words to form Denials?——You are a *Man*, 'tis true, but then you are not, or at least I cannot think you are, compos'd of that same fickle and irresolute Stuff most of your Sex are made of——No, Heaven, to that lovely, that most perfect Form, has join'd a Mind as faultless: You have Honour, Wisdom, and Good-Nature; the first of these excellent Qualities makes it impossi-
ble

ble for you to pretend a Passion where you have none, and the two last ever to use her with an *Indifference*, whom you once believ'd worthy the most zealous *Ardour*—When a Woman is forsaken, it is not so much the Effect of want of Merit in *herself*, as in the Person she has made *choice* of. We see the most tender, faithful, and most lovely of our Sex, after possession, slighted and contemned; but is not this wholly owing to the wavering Disposition of the *Man*? Certainly. What Character therefore can such a Wretch expect, but Fool, Villain, or both?—To suspect *you* then, would be an Impiety one cannot, knowing you, be guilty of—no; you have no Tincture of Deceit, no base Alloy of Artifice, or Hypocrisy sullies the Brightness of that Angelick Nature.—I could confide in you enough to hazard all—but yet, I wish, you would be satisfy'd with what I have already granted; for though I cannot think obliging you a Crime, my unfortunate Circumstances will make it appear so to the World—That Demon, Law! —curs'd, curs'd Decorum! and tyrannick Rules, bar up my way to your Embrace, and fright me from my Joys—I know you will tell me, these Considerations are *selfish*, and that Love, if real, will overlook, or scorn, such Obstacles—Oh! too, too sure, it will——my yielding Soul

Soul avows the Almighty Truth, and, in
 a Sigh, relinquishes Objection——Oh!
 never did any *Man* deserve like *you*——ne-
 ver was any *Woman* susceptible like *me*!——
 'Tis but a Day since I beheld you, and yet
 it seems an Age——I go with my Hus-
 band this Evening to the *Opera*; I wish
 you would be there, he cannot avoid see-
 ing you, and will certainly invite you to
 come into our Box; we must both indeed
 be under a Constraint before him, but still
 we shall be together——be near, be close to
 each other; and is not that, my charming
 Friend! a Happiness either of us would
 go thro greater Difficulties to obtain?
 Besides, there are a thousand soft Amuse-
 ments, which even his Presence cannot
 deprive us of——I shall often drop my
 Fan,—my Glove,—my Handkerchief, to
 give you an Opportunity of restoring them
 to me——You may present me with
 Sweetmeats—Fruit—Snuff—and what hin-
 ders but all these little Gallantries may be
 accompany'd with Looks, which may ex-
 plain our meanings to each other, tho un-
 intelligible to any but our-selves: My Hus-
 band is little vers'd in the Language of the
 Eyes; or if he were more so, entirely unsus-
 picious of my Conduct, or your Designs, he
 will be wholly taken up with regarding
 the Musick, and I promise myself an un-
 conceivable Satisfaction in this stolen De-
 light.

light.——Ah! how cruel is my Fate,
 which will not permit me publickly to a-
 vow a Passion, which for its Zeal, its Puri-
 ty, and Truth, might be the Wonder of
 the admiring World, and shame those lit-
 tle wanton Heats, and Starts of Fancy,
 which, while they *wear*, *disgrace* the name
 of Love!——I wish, methinks (with what
 pleasing Impossibilities do I beguile the
 Time!) I could wish, I say, not only that I
 were unmarried for your sake, for then our
 Fortunes would be too much upon an Equa-
 lity to make the Deference I would pay
 you remarkable; but to be something emi-
 nently great—something beyond even wild
 Ambition's Aim, that nobly scorning all
 my scepter'd Slaves, I might, from all the
 Race of Man, chuse you, adorned with
 Constancy and native Worth, to place my
 envied Glories on your Head, proud in the
 Title of your Wife alone——or I could like
 ——not that for ten thousand Worlds I
 would have any Mischief reach you——
 but it would please me to hear you were
 reduced to some great strait, something
 which threaten'd even your very Life, and
 which nothing could redeem you from,
 but my hazarding my own. How gladly
 would I lay it down, and feel no Pangs in
 Death, but those which leaving *you* would
 cause?——How romantick would this ap-
 pear to the generality of Lovers——I mean
 those

those who are called such, for to conceal a multitude of vastly different Views, that noble Appellation serves: In *Courtship*, it either clokes that brutal Appetite which Humanity ought to be ashamed of, or, if possible, a yet more sordid Aim, vile Interest——after *Marriage*, 'tis often worn for form; many Couples, whatever Reasons joined them, having been obliged to *put on* the Mask, are too modest to *pluck it off*, and cannot endure to avow the Dissimulation they have been guilty of, tho they continue it with Pain——Believe me, 'tis to some such ends we are indebted for the number of *Inamorato's* which we daily hear of: A refin'd, sincere, and disinterested Passion is a Prodigy, which so few are capable of conceiving, that those, whose Years have made them past, or more serious Avocations have taken off the Follies of *counterfeiting* it, look on the *Reality* to be but notional. But I resolve to be a living Proof, and if no happy Opportunity arrives, whereby I may confute the ill-judging World; yet you! you who are all the World to me, shall own yourself belov'd, to such a pitch of Elegance, as *Thought*, your boundless Sublimity of Thought, alone, can reach——I would say more, but am interrupted——Adieu——Dear Vanquisher of my Soul, adieu.

P O S T.

P O S T S C R I P T.

THE Person who obliged me to break off so abruptly, was *Mademoiselle de* ———. I hoped I never should have had occasion to mention her any more to you, but her Mother (curse on the designing Beldame) makes a Ball next Tuesday at her House at *Auteville*. Her Pretence is to return those Civilities she received at my *Husband's* Entertainment, and that which you made at *Vincennes*; but I see thro the Contrivance: 'Tis for your sake alone she would appear magnificent; the Daughter's Vanity, and the Mother's Partiality, mistake the Gallantries you paid them for the Effects of Love, and both of them speak of you in a manner, which declares they are not insensible of your Merit—— Now keep your Promise!——Now hold your Resolution of avoiding her!——if any part of that Tenderneſs you have professed for me be real, mortify the Pride of this Woman, and refuse the Invitation——to excuse going, you may feign some slight Indisposition, and be let blood; I would make the same Pretence, but that I fear it would appear like too great a Sympathy between us; and since I am obliged to go, you may depend on having as faithful an Account of every thing that passes, as if
i you

you were there yourself——Do not, therefore, fail to comply with this one Request, nor grudge to lose a little of your Blood, to gratify her, who would willingly part with all hers to do you Service.



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LETTER X.

AH! what an Alteration has a few hours made in my Condition! With what Tranquillity did I yesterday sit down to write! And with what Confusion do I now begin!——I fear, my dearest Friend, I am undone.——Ever since we came from the *Opera* last night, my Husband has appeared in such Disorder, as I am too well acquainted with his Humour, to believe could spring from any trivial Cause——I do not remember ever to have seen him in so great a Perplexity since the unfortunate hour I became his Wife: He has, without doubt, taken notice of something between us, which has alarmed him; but though I have recollected every thing that passed yesterday, I am far from being able to guess at the Occasion: but

i 2

that

that some fatal one has happened, I am but too well assured—Had you not (Oh how I tremble with the Apprehension!) any of my Letters in your Pocket, which by some Accident you might drop?—I fear, in spite of my repeated Prayers, you have not burn'd them—Confess the Truth, for Heaven's sake, and ease me of this terrible Incertitude—my Thoughts are on a Rack—If by your Negligence I am betray'd, there is not a *Woman* upon Earth so miserable as myself, nor *Man* so guilty as you—*If!* did I say?—Alas! too sure 'tis so—what else could have happened since last night to create so sudden a Change in his Disposition—You saw how gay—how easy and unconcerned he was all the time of the *Opera*—yet as soon as he came home, he shut himself into his Closet, refused to sup with me; and when he went to Bed, spoke not a word to me, but sigh'd, as if his Heart were cleaving with each Breath he fetched. I durst not ask him the Reason of his Chagrin, for fear of being told what would have struck me dead with shame; but pretended to fall fast asleep, that I might the better observe him—*Oh unfortunate Opera*, said he, *how dearly have I purchased the Pleasure of seeing thee!*—What Interpretation can I put on these words, but the most dreadful one my Thoughts can form?—Early in the

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morning he rose, walked hastily about the Chamber, then called to have his Coach got ready, and is this moment gone to my Father's; for the Servants told me since, that he ordered to be drove there——Now tell me! now, lovely Ruiner! advise me what to do!——Assist me in this cruel Extremity——he is this moment, without doubt, complaining of me to my Parents—they will both soon be here, and, perhaps, bring with them a Testimony, too plain, of my Perfidy, for me to entertain the least hope of an Evasion——How shall I stand the Shock?——How bear the just Upbraidings of an injured Husband?——How endure the Rage of an incens'd Father?——or the more piercing Tears of a fond tender Mother, whose only Grief is for my Shame——Heaven! what will become of me?——Oh that my Life were of as short a Date as my Reputation!——that I could die e'er see the Faces of those I have wronged!——What will it avail me to say, I have been guilty of no real Crime?——Who will give Credit to my words, when such Appearances are against me? Or will the number of Examples of Wives, who have sinned against their Husbands in this manner, serve as an Authority for me?——Will all your Stock of Charms and Merit be a sufficient Plea for my Defence? Oh! no, those partial Judges will be blind,

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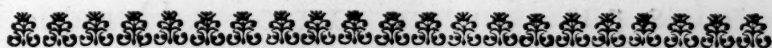
be deaf to all but Rage and Indignation—
 But, if they were not, if (which sure, to
 Persons interested as they are, would be
 the greatest of Impossibilities) I could per-
 suade them to regard you with *my* Eyes—
 to think no otherwise of my *Fault* than as
 of a *Misfortune*, which I could not, know-
 ing you, prevent; yet, even then, I were
 the most miserable of Women: for, Oh!
 my dear Undoer! how should I be able to
 avoid condemning you? What Excuses
 could my ingenious Love invent, of force
 enough to engage my *Reason* to forgive you?
 Must not my fond Heart confess you guilty
 of both Imprudence and Infidelity, and
 mingle Hatred with its Dotage? Have I
 not commanded—have I not conjur'd you,
 a thousand and a thousand times, to burn
 those dangerous Testimonies of my Af-
 fection, and is not your Disobedience—
 your Refusal worthy my most severe Re-
 sentment?——If my Suspicion wrongs
 you, believe I find my Punishment in my
 Crime, and that, in but imagining I have
 occasion to accuse you, *my Soul* feels all those
 Tortures, *yours* would merit if my Fears
 are just—What is it, which the World calls
 valuable, I would not joyfully resign, that in
 exchange I might be blest'd with the affu-
 rance of your Innocence? And how many
 improbable Conjectures do I form, that
 my Husband's Ill-Humour proceeds not
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from Jealousy? But 'tis too visible, and I endeavour to deceive myself in vain—his Return will shortly bring the cruel Certainty; but if I yet am dear to you, if my Peace, my Honour, or my Life be of any estimation with you, I beg to hear from you before——Arm me, at least, for this terrible Encounter; and if you cannot excuse what you have done, let me not think you want Contrition for so ruinous an Accident; for that would add to my Affliction, a Load more grievous, than all my Husband's, or my Parents Rage, is capable of oppressing me with. Farewel—may you be ever happy, whatever Miseries are decreed for me.



*A BILLET, sent immediately
after.*

BE comforted, my Soul's adored! be comforted. As I have made you Partaker of my Grievs, be now also Partaker of my Joy!—The moment I had sent my Letter, my Husband returned with as much *Satisfaction* in his Countenance, as he went out with *Discontent*; plucking off his Glove last night at the *Opera*, he drop'd a Diamond Ring, worth between five and six

fix hundred Pistoles; and thinking it too late to go back to the Theatre in search of it, would not give me the Vexation of hearing he had so great a Loss, till he was past all hopes of recovering it: (How little is he acquainted with my Sentiments? and how much more easy had I been to have known the Truth, though it had been twice as many Thousands?) This morning, as I have before informed you, he went to my Father; but it was only to engage him to prepare me for the Misfortune, in case he should not be able to retrieve it——But he was more lucky than he expected; the Man, who takes care of the Boxes, found the Ring, and restor'd it immediately on his Enquiry: The Adventure has put him into so good a Humour, that he is preparing for our little Journey to *Anteville* with all the pleasure imaginable. The Place of Rendezvous, for all the Company to meet, is the great Walk in the *Tuilleries*, where I intreat (in spite of the Resolutions of yesterday) I may not fail to find you——it will be no Feast to me, if you are not there, and I doubt not but you will behave yourself to Mademoiselle *de*—— in such a manner, as shall give me no just Occasion of Suspicion; and I promise never to think *myself* affronted, till I am *really* so.

THE



THE French Editor speaks of a great number of Letters succeeding these; of which no more were preserv'd than the three following ones, and which seem to be written a long time afterwards.

LETTER XI.



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LETTER XI.

IT is most true, thou dear Disposer of my Fate! it is most true, that I was one of those who advised you to go for *England*; but I could not have believed you would have been brought so easily, if at all, to form so cruel a Resolution——Good God!—how much has my fond Heart deceived itself——You have then determined for the fatal Voyage, and make no Difficulty to tell me so——What? said I, *no Difficulty!* alas! you tell it me with a barbarous *Tranquility!*—an Unconcern more stabbing even than the parting with you——you go to-morrow——go! without hopes of seeing me again these two years——and yet you talk more calmly of it, than once you would of a Week's Absence——Yes, ingrateful and forgetful Man! there *was* a time when every little Separation merited Regret; when by your
Intimacy

Intimacy with my Husband, you unsuspected saw me every day, *Night* always found the History of your Love unfinish'd — What tender Languishments *then* accompany'd your Adieus! — What soft Complainings! — What reluctant Sighs *then* manifested your Concern to leave me! And when, at last, oblig'd, by cruel Forms, to part, how oft would you attempt to go, how oft return, repeat each fond Endearment o'er and o'er, and yet have something still to say, which a kind Billet would the next morning bring me; a thousand nameless Soul-seducing Arts your Passion *then* inspir'd you with — Heaven! why is *Man*, for Godlike Reason, and for Strength of Soul, renown'd above our Sex, when Falshood and Deceit make up his Being? The fleeting *Air* wears not more Shapes than does his changing Temper! Nor are the inconstant *Seas* less true to those who trust them — Basely ungenerous! thankless! are you all! meanly submissive, fawning, when you *sue* — insolent, proud, and pityless *entreated* — Art *thou* not so? — and thou art sure the best — the very best, and most untainted of thy kind — so sweet! so kind! so lovely! and so wise! that but for mutability in Love thou wouldst be all Divine! — I am not *jealous* now, nor do I think, in the long Series of our tender Friendship, you ever had a Wish beyond

me: 'tis what you *may*, not what you *have* been guilty of, torments me. Absence and Distance are cruel Foes to Love; and, Oh! you leave me (that's the Thought which racks me) with so slight an Impression of my Idea, that it will be no difficult matter for the next face you see, more beautiful than mine (which Heaven knows is easy to be found) to drive me from your Memory for ever——Forgive the Transports of my beating Heart, nor judge so meanly of me, as to believe me partial enough to my own Happiness to wish your Stay—No, go where your Fortune sends you—obey a cruel Mother, and sacrifice to Interest and to Duty all——all but your Wishes——still let them be mine——still let me preserve the envy'd Place I held in your Esteem, and I'll absolve my Fate from all Injustice——Great God! what Inconsistencies does my good Opinion of you suggest?——Where are the Assurances you can give me of your Constancy?——How can I entertain Hopes, which, with so much Reason, appear fallacious even in their Formation?——If, in me 'twas the Effects, as sure it was, of a refin'd disinterested Passion to bid you *go*; had yours been such, it had oblig'd your *Stay*——no; 'tis too plain, Ambition is now your darling Mistress, and content with having been able to seduce me from my Duty,

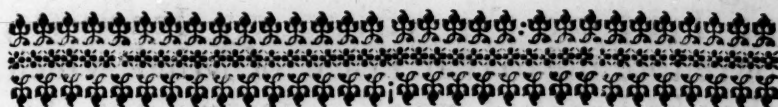
corrupt

corrupt my Innocence, triumph over my
 Weakness, and get the better of my Vir-
 tue, you leave me, without *regret*——
 Leave me, to see me——when?——Oh
 Heavens!——perhaps——no more!——If
 I thought it too much to be separated from
 you but by a few *Streets*, and curs'd those
 interposing Houses, which barred the Pro-
 spect of that dear Place where you resided
 from my Window, how shall I endure to
 continue in a *Kingdom* where you are not?
 —If every Day was lost in which I saw
 you not, and the succeeding Night still
 brought on Tears, how shall my Soul sup-
 port so tedious an Absence?——two Years!
 ——two Ages!——an Eternity of Woe!——
 Will not each hour yield me Encrease of
 Misery?——Will not Reflection still grow
 stronger in me? And Grief, Remorse,
 Fear, Jealousy, and Despair rack me al-
 ternately with incessant Horror——till they
 distract, or send me to my Grave?——Yes,
 this most wretched, this abandon'd Wo-
 man, will shortly discharge you of your
 Vows; and, e'er you yet reach *England*,
 perhaps, my Soul (for that permission is
 all I ask of Heaven) may find its way be-
 fore you, and clothe itself anew in bo-
 died Air, to meet your Landing——To
 what an extravagant pitch does the Whirl-
 wind of my Passion bear me? Confused,
 and wild, I know not what I say——Re-
 gard


gard me not ; for if thou dost, I know, in spite of what my Desperation made me utter, thou yet hast Love enough to hazard all——Remember, when Reason held Dominion o'er my Thoughts, how often, and how strenuously I have press'd thee to this Voyage ; nay, chid that Tenderness which engag'd thy Stay——But Oh ! there's mighty Difference betwixt a *distant* and a *present* Woe——I dare trust myself to reflect no farther for fear of a Relapse——Let me see you this Evening, as soon as possible, to consult measures for our frequent writing to each other——Miserable Consolation for a Loss like mine ! yet it is all my Fate allows after this night——this last dear, cruel night——Wou'd to God it were also the last of my Life, and that I could be so happy as to die, before I speak that dreadful word, *Adieu*.



L E T-



LETTER XII.

 T is now three Days since your Departure, yet I have receiv'd no Letter from you: Is this the Effect of all your tender Promises and Imprecations, that not one should pass without your writing to me?——Was that enchanting Softness of your parting words, and the Tears which accompany'd them, owing only to a short-liv'd Pity? And if there was a necessity that I should be abandoned, is there also a *Necessity* that I must be *forgotten*?——Yes, yes, thou dear Destroyer of my Soul, the great Affair you go on——Variety of Objects, and a thousand gay Amusements, which must attend where'er you come in place, have already blotted out the Memory of your Passion and my sufferings——Full of the hopes of future Grandeur, you go in search of Fame and Honour, while I am left to mourn

mourn the Loss of mine, to count the tedious Hours, to number out my Days in Sighs, and hasten Time in vain—Alas! **no Time can e'er retrieve my Innocence, or restore me to that Peace of Mind which thou hast robbed me of—**Forgive the Unkindness of that rash Expression, when to thy Merits I resigned my all, I had, in recompence, Joys! which could never be too dearly purchas'd: For ten blest'd years who ever knew Felicity like mine! Transports on Transports still were multiply'd! and from that ne'er to be, by me, forgotten Hour in which I saw you first, down to that dreadful one of your Departure, I found I still grew nearer to your Soul! each ravishing Testimony of our mutual Tenderness gave *you new Passion! me new Happiness!* And after such a glorious Day, if a long Night of Woe succeeds, I ought not to complain——No; by the Remembrance of my Pleasures past——by the Heart-rending Pangs I suffer now——by the charming Hopes thy well-known Truth inspires——and by the agonizing Fears thy cruel Silence gives! I swear, I do not——will not——cannot e'er repent that I have known and lov'd such Excellence——nor would I, if 'twere in my power, forgo some rapturous Reflections, though to regain that dull Tranquillity I enjoyed before. Are all those dear Ideas wholly extinct

tinct in thee? Can it be possible thou canst
 so suddenly be chang'd from the fond
 melting *Lover* to the designing *Statesman*?
 Couldst thou not spare, in all these three
 long Days, one moment's time to tell me
 that thou still wer't mine? Or with thy
 Love hast thou thrown off all Pity too,
 and Complaisance, that you can neither
 feel, nor *feign*, at least, to feel some of
 those Pains you give? Was it to prolong
 my *Miseries*, you were so lavish of your
 Tendernefs, to conjure me to preserve my
Life? Does it afford greater Triumph to
 your Pride, that I should die by your *Dis-*
dain, than by your *Absence*?——It is not
 ——cannot be——and when I consider the
 Impossibility of so strange a Transforma-
 tion, it fills me with a thousand Terrors,
 that some pernicious Accident has hap-
 pen'd, more dreadful to my Imagination
 than all I have nam'd can be——Num-
 berless Mischiefs wait on Travellers, and
 should any fatal one have overtaken thee,
 how wouldst thou, in the other World,
 forgive the Injustice of my Doubts!——or
 how could I forgive myself!——Grant,
 Heaven! thou mayst be ever safe——be e-
 ver well, whate'er becomes of me——
 Still may thy Guardian Angel hover round
 thee! and, in case of Danger, call down
 to thy Assistance whole Myriads of illuf-
 trious Spirits——Farewel, my dearest, my
 l eternal

eternal Charmer!——You cannot give me so welcome a Proof of *your* Love, as to tell me you are in Health——nor can I give you a greater of *mine*, than to assure you, that your Life and Prosperity are my chiefest Care, and the Continuance of your Affection but my second Wish.



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LETTER XIII.

Writ the same Day.

PARDON me, O God of my Desires! Pardon me, I beseech you, for disobeying the Injunction you laid on me at our parting, not to afflict myself with causeless Fears—I ought indeed to have known you better, than to imagine there was a possibility for you (whose every Action is influenced by Justice and by Truth) either to deceive or scorn me, and to have imputed my Misfortune of not hearing from you to any Reason, rather than your Unkindness or Neglect—but my *Excess* of Love (if that can be called so, which is inspired by such an Object) has often led me into the like Errors; and as I can *alledge* nothing else in my Vindication, so I am confident I *need* no more to

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render me excusable—How much unable am I to express what 'twas I felt, when, immediately after I had sent my Letter, I received both yours, which, by some neglect in the Officers, had been detained at the Post-house—Such a mixture of Surprise and Extasy—such a wild Torrent of o'erflowing Pleasure, as surely none but those who taste can guess at, rushed thro each Vein, and swelled me even to bursting—scarce could your Presence give me fiercer Joys—Oh thou for ever lov'd! for ever worshipp'd! What shall I say?—What shall I do to compensate for all thy matchless Faith—thy matchless Tenderness?—All the Ideas formful Fancy feigns—all the exemplary Tales of Constancy, of Purity, and Zeal, are poor, and want of thy Perfection—Methinks, I now no more regret our Separation; Virtue is not Virtue till 'tis tempted, and Absence is a fiery Tryal, through which Love seldom passes, without losing great part of its Brightness; but thine, I am confident, will remain unfully'd, increase in Value, and gain a nobler Lustre by so dangerous a Proof——Yes, I will cease Complaints, and till that happy point of Time arrives, which shall restore us to more solid Joys, beguile the others with the delightful Imagery of Contemplation! Remembrance of the *old* and frequent Letters still affording

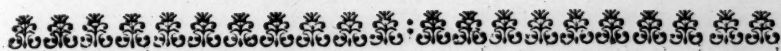
new

new Themes of Bliss, will make the hours
 slide pleasingly away, and we shall *meet*
 again, before we know we have been *di-*
vided; if those may be properly said to be
divided, whose *Souls*, like ours, are *united*.
 You tell me that (next to the seeing me)
 you desire nothing more, than that there
 were a possibility of my being sensible, not
 only of every thing you say and do, but
 also of every Thought which passes in
 your Heart——’Tis wondrous kind that
 tender Wish——and, in requital, I must
 inform you, that the utmost of *my* Ambi-
 tion (making your own Reserve) is to
 have the power, in words as expressive and
 as forcible as yours, to let you know how
 full —— how absolute your Dominion is
 o’er *mine* !——How much you govern all
 my Words and Actions——and with what
 an Infinity of Pleasure each willing Senti-
 ment avows your Sway !———Oh thou
 transporting Dear ! Wou’d Heaven, to make
 me worthy of thee, add to my *Beauty*, and
 inspire my *Wit*, till both appear’d as pure,
 as sparkling, and as lasting as my *Love*, I
 should have nothing left to ask——but as
 I am, thus dress’d in languid Charms, I am
 ashamed that I *possess* so much, *deserve* so
 little——Forbear then, I conjure thee, from
 this time forward, to give me Praises not
 my Due, but always continue to think my
 Passion a sufficient Merit, to counterbal-
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lance all other Imperfections—See! what a cruel Accident now puts me in mind to what a Distance you are removed; the Boy, who waits to carry this to the Post, acquaints me, that my Time is almost elapsed, and obliges me to bid you Adieu, long before my Inclination would permit me.—

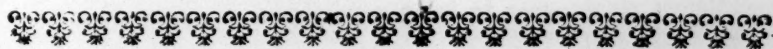
The End of the Letters.





A
DISCOURSE
CONCERNING
WRITINGS
Of this Nature.

By Way of ESSAY.



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A DISCOURSE *concern-* *ing Writings of this Nature, by* *way of Essay.*



TH E *Inconveniences*, not to mention the *Dangers*; which there are in holding a Correspondence, such as the preceding *Letters*, are so well known, that an Endeavour to display what is obvious to the meanest Capacity, may, perhaps, be looked on as impertinent by Ladies, who boast a Superiority of Discernment; but as it is by those only I am ambitious to be read, I must beg leave to remind them, that it is that very Elegance of Soul, and refined Genius, which, while it raises them above the rest of their Sex, makes them sometimes too apt to despise those necessary Cautions, without which, their *Wit*, like an ungoverned Courser, will be ready to plunge, not only their Reputation, but their Peace of Mind, into a Sea of Troubles; out of which it must be with all the difficulty in the World, if ever, they are recovered.

Letters from a Woman, distinguished for her Beauty, Wit, Virtue, or any other Excellence, are so great and valuable a Token of her Regard

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for the Person to whom they are written, that it is not to be wonder'd at, that *Men* should, by all possible Assiduity, endeavour to obtain so undeniable a Proof of Favour; it is a kind of Food for their Ambition, their Love, and, too often, their Vanity: but what a *Woman* gains by her Condescension (besides the Reputation of a Talent, which had better be eternally concealed, than made use of this way) I cannot find out.

There are no two things more inexpressibly distant in their Consequences, than *Wit* and *Wisdom*; in confidence of the *one*, we run precipitately into any Labyrinth the Gaiety of Youth and Fancy may lead us to, nor doubt to find a Clue at pleasure which will extricate us; but the *other* inspires self-preserving Fears, fastens the Chain of Thought, and bids us stand upon our guard: therefore, where the *former* abounds, if there is not a great Stock also of the *latter*, the Owner will be liable to many Inadvertencies in her Conduct. What dares not a Woman do, when she fancies herself a *Wit*? secured by that, as she believes, impenetrable Rampart, she defies not only all the Darts of Flattery from without, but the secret Workings of Nature, and her Sex's Tenderness within; and for want of calling a Counsel of her Thoughts, suffers the Fortress of her Honour to be beaten down by the more watchful Foe, or surrendered by the treacherous *Inmates*.

Frequent Examples make good the Truth of this Assertion; and as there is scarce a possibility for a Woman, famed for any Perfection, to escape Sollicitations of this nature; so in the resisting them lies the greatest Proof of her *Wisdom*, as well as *Virtue*. How often have I heard some Ladies say, when they find themselves attacked, *I will write to this Fellow,—pretend an equal Regard,—and when I have raised his Hopes and his Desires, then*

turn

turn him into Ridicule, and make him know the Artifice of Love is vain, when used to a Woman of Wit. —

Thus do they unawares entangle themselves ! But, alas ! how common is it for a little Time and Assiduity in the Man to triumph over this Resolution, and how dear does the fair Deceiver, caught in her own Snare, pay for the Experiment ? But as this can be the Case only of the *Coquet* Part of the Sex, who are generally too fond of their Follies to be prevailed upon to quit them ; I shall spare my-self and them the Trouble of *fruitless* Admonitions, and leave them to incur the Punishment their Vanity deserves ; that of being often *in Love*, as often *forsaken*, and always *exposed*.

But if there were really no other Dangers in a Conversation of this kind, than the Apprehensions of its being known, and censured by the Malicious and Envious, which are certainly much the greatest part of the World ; the continual Uneasiness which must attend such Fears, one would think, were sufficient to make any Woman, of but common Prudence, avoid the necessity of falling into them : for, as Mr. Udall has it,

*Who would forsake a Walk, whose pleasant Round
With fragrant Flowers and vernal Sweets was
crown'd,
For one where Thorns and Hemlock load the
Ground ?*

And that such a Correspondence, after Marriage, can be held without *Fears*, is absolutely impossible. In the first Place, a Woman had need be well assured as to the Honour of the Man to whom she writes, that his Vanity—some causeless Quarrel—or a new, and one whom he may think, a more agreeable Correspondent, may not, some time or other, influence him to expose her.

Opinion is partial, and those of the best Sense have often been deceived in the choice of their Friends. I remember to have heard a Story very credibly reported of a Gentleman, who to gratify the Ill-Nature and Malice of a Lady (whom he either loved, or had some potent Reasons to feign a Passion for) so artfully counterfeited one for another, that he at last drew into a Conversation, which, if not the Destruction of her Virtue, was most certainly so of her Reputation; and having compleated his Design, made his successful Court to her Rival, with those Trophies of his Conquest, her Letters in his hand, which the *Prude* immediately published, to the utter Ruin of the unfortunate, but too easy Believer. That such a Contrivance was base to the last degree, it must be confessed; and we cannot imagine there are many Men (especially among those of a liberal Education) who would, in this manner, sacrifice any one Woman to the Resentment of another: yet notwithstanding, all wise People will guard themselves against even a possibility of Danger. Considering the Artifices which are daily used in Affairs of this kind, 'tis not very easy to discover a *real* Passion from a *counterfeit*. If a Woman loves, she is too inclinable to interpret every Action as she would wish to have it, and as all Passions are at Enmity with Reason, this is the least possible of any to be reconciled to it; for by the sweetness of its first Approaches, it makes us more *unwilling* than *unable* to drive it from our Souls. The pleasing Ruin comes dressed all in Smiles, nothing so delightful as the first Dawnings of a rising Tenderness, and we think 'tis doing too great a Violence to our Nature, to cloud so sweet a Sun-shine with Reflection. Some indeed there are, who have Solidity enough to weigh the Consequence, to discern the distant Storm before it
breaks

breaks upon them; but wanting Resolution to take shelter from it, are the most miserable of all: 'tis better in such a case to have no Reason at all, than not to have enough. The happy *Idiot*, blest in Security, postpones not her Misfortune; and, perhaps, for many Years enjoys a state of Tranquillity; while the *Woman of Wit*, with aking Heart, perceives from far, the Ruin she is sure to meet, and fain would fly, but cannot.

But suppose this is not the case, and that we have found a Person really adorn'd with Honour, Wisdom, Gratitude, Secrecy, and Truth; and that a long Acquaintance, and deep Inspection into his Nature and Principles, make the Liking such a one more the effect of *Judgment* than *Fancy*; which, by the way, does not very often happen: not but there are Men who deserve more than Eloquence can speak; but then they are but few, and 'tis seldom that such a one falls to the Lot of a Woman of *Merit*.

*Sincerity, like Fortune, still is blind,
The Faithful, rarely do the Faithful find:
'Twou'd too much take our Wishes from above,
Shou'd we, on Earth, Heav'n's choicest Blessing*
(*prove.*)

But if two such, equally worthy, equally loving and belov'd, by Miracle shou'd meet; yet, even then, a Woman of nice Honour cannot think herself secure: Letters often live longer than the Person who wrote them—they may by some Accident be lost—may miscarry—somebody must be trusted to convey 'em, and the Fidelity of such sort of People is not much to be depended on.—But if all these Apprehensions should be likewise remov'd; if the *Confidant* be a Person of approv'd Discretion and Truth;—if the Parties concerned, contrive some Form of Writing unintelligible to all

all the World but one another—if to prevent Suspicion, if even the Hand should be seen, they are burnt as soon as read; yet what is all this Circumspection, this Watchfulness, this Guard over every Action, Word, and Look, but a continual Slavery, which, methinks, a Soul design'd for Liberty should scorn.

But the greatest, and most tormenting fear of all, is, that we have, or ought to have, of ourselves: when once a Heart has receiv'd the Impression of an Idea, tho never so slightly, Contemplation strengthens it insensibly; and if we make never so many Resolutions to contain ourselves in the bounds of the most strict Reservedness, we cannot be sure but some unguarded Moment may arrive, in which *Passion* may triumph over *Reason*: Paper cannot blush, and our Thoughts, in spite of us, will often take a greater liberty in expressing themselves that way, than the natural Bashfulness of Virtue will permit 'em to do any other. But if it goes not so far, we are fill'd, at least, while thus employ'd, with Sentiments not at all to the advantage of those Principles we ought to cherish: besides, the answering any Letters of this kind, is a sufficient Encouragement to the Man to proceed; and I have somewhere read,

*The Pen can furrow a fond Female's Heart,
And pierce it more than Cupid's talk'd-of Dart:
Letters, a kind of Magick Virtue have,
And, like strong Philters, human Souls enslave!*

There is certainly an Influence in an artful, tender, and passionate Way of Writing, which more sensibly affects the Soul, than all the Tongue can utter: Words, tho never so moving, and with never so great a Grace deliver'd, we may avoid list'ning to, or they may slide from our Memory,

memory, when Letters will remain perpetual *Monitors*. Tho we know each Line is an Arrow aimed at our Virtue or our Peace; our Curiosity, or our Inclination, seldom fails engaging us to peruse them: from that we fall to examining the happy Turn of Thought,—the Elegance of the Expression,—the easy Flow of Stile,—discover unnumbered Beauties in every Sentence,—and admire the *Author's* Love, or Wit, or both, which have inspir'd him with so uncommon a Delicacy: thence we reflect on his Behaviour while he was writing,—think in what manner he look'd—how he sigh'd—what he wish'd—imagine we dive into his very Soul—find out Meanings there, to which, perhaps, he is a stranger—and prepossess'd by this time, construe every thing to the advantage of his Passion, and our own Desires. In this pleasing, but destructive Amusement, we lose our selves so long, that the return of Reason is too weak to drive it from our Minds; we wake indeed from the deluding Dream, but the remembrance of it lasts; and *Doubts* and *Terrors*, mingling with *Hopes* and *Wishes*, make an eternal War within our Bosoms.

This is a State of Life which certainly none wou'd be ambitious of; but as we slide into it by degrees, and unknown, as it were, even to ourselves; our only way of Prevention, is to make the best use of those Fears when they first assail us—that is, to allow them to be just—For, in the first place, no Woman, who had any regard to her Fame, ever put herself so much in the power of a Man, as to write to him, without *believing*, at least, that she might do it with Safety; and in the next, I have that Charity for my Sex, as to imagine, that even those among them who have been led into the most *criminal* Conversations, enter'd

ter'd into 'em with no other View than what
thou'd terminate in Innocence : therefore,

*Tear up the Seeds of the unrooted Ill,
While they are weak, and you have power to kill :
Slip not one Moment ; who defers to-day,
To-morrow may be hardned in Delay.* Tate.

And indeed those little *Fears* seem design'd
by Providence to correct that too great *Softness*,
which is generally found in our Sex : and, tho a
Woman wou'd be a strange sort of a Creature
wanting *Tenderness*, yet where it too much
abounds, or is misapply'd, it commonly needs no
other assistance to draw the Owner into the Path
of Ruin. A Lady of my Acquaintance, perhaps
not without reason, fell one day, as she was sit-
ting with me, into this Poetical Exclamation :

*Softness ! thou Origine of Female Woes !
Thou Spring from which our common Ruin flows !
In vain deceiving Man wou'd kneel and swear,
Were we, like him, hard-hearted and severe :
But, by thy fond Emotions, first betray'd,
Feign'd Sighs, false Vows, with real ones are paid.
We wail Mishaps which to no Heart were known,
But what the Idea raises in our own ;
With Sympathetic Influence idly mourn,
And into Truth the well-wrought Fiction turn :
Then, overwhelm'd in Seas of Passion fall,
And Man, th' unpitying Tyrant, seizes all.*

How much better is it then to force our *Ten-
derness* to yield to our *Fears*, for once, than by a
vain opposition be oblig'd to endure their *Perse-
cutions* for ever ! that is, till we get rid of them
to be tormented by worse Feinds, Remorse and
Despair.

but you'll say, this is a Task much easier *talk'd* of than *perform'd*. I grant it is, and that Love and Nature are Foes too mighty to be vanquish'd without a more than *manly* Resolution: but since that Sex make no difficulty to resolve to throw off their Passion, on the least *Appearance* of any Inconvenience attending it; so I would have *ours*, who have *Certainty* on their side, endeavour with all their Force to be before-hand with them.

I have heard some Ladies (in the Infancy of Love) dispute very warmly in its behalf, declare that they look'd on a state of *Indifference*, to be no better than a state of *Stupidity*; and that they wou'd not part with their Passion, with all the little Fears, Hopes, Wishes, Languishments which attend it, for the World: but, I believe, there are but few in whom this Opinion had any long duration. In a word, according to the Effects it produces in the generality of the World, we may say that Love is a Passion, which, while 'tis kept in subjection, diverts us with a thousand gay Amusements; but the mischief on't is, that from a *Servant* it quickly becomes a *Master*, and, then, no Tyrant so inhuman.

Not but that there are a great many who exclaim against this Passion without any manner of reason; and having gone as far with the receiv'd Opinion of the World, as I thought Justice would permit, I think myself obliged to redeem the name of Love from those Aspersions, the intermixture of other less excusable Passions has drawn upon it: as much, at least, as 'tis in my power, by making those Remarks which have fallen in the compass of my little Observation.

Love varies in his Effects according to the Principles and Disposition of the Person possess'd with it; a *generous* Soul it enflames with a noble Thirst of Improvement, an Ambition to attain those Ex-

cellencies which may render the Lover worthy of *his, or her* Desire; aims more at *deserving* than *possessing*; and if deny'd a suitable Reward, rather pities the *Blindness*, than hates the *Ingratitude* of the Object. In a *mean* and *narrow* Mind, it inspires mean and narrow *Views*, looks no farther than the gratification of its Wishes; to gain, or secure that end, scruples nothing, tho ne'er so vile or treacherous, and failing of it, turns all to Fury and Revenge: 'tis the baseness of our own Natures which often hurries us to extravagant and wicked Actions, when Love bears all the blame. If we see Persons tormenting their Families, and plaguing all the World who know them, with *Jealousy*, we are apt to say, it is because they *love* too well: A *Man*, indeed, whose Honour is at stake, may have some Excuse for Watchfulness over a suspected Wife; but when a *Woman* is jealous of her Husband, or her Lover, it springs not from *Love*, but *Pride*, *Envy*, or something *worse*, which it does not become a Woman's Pen to give a name to: or if we hear of any despairing Wretch, who, disappointed of his Wishes, is ready to lay violent hands on his own Life, 'tis all imputed to *Love*, when, in reality, 'tis owing only to his own devilish and revengeful Disposition.

That *Love*, therefore, which is inspir'd by a *worthy* Object, in a *noble* Mind, is so far from being pernicious, that it fills the Souls of two such Persons with a kind of heavenly Delight: they are bless'd in one another, happy in themselves, and amiable to all who have the good-fortune to be of their Acquaintance.

I am sensible this Digression is foreign to the purpose on which I sat down to write, and that Vanity is a Foible so much in fashion, that a great many may take advantage of my Words, and imagine themselves qualified for that happy Condition

dition I have been describing : but I would advise all such, before they make a Conclusion, to examine carefully, not only their own Hearts, but likewise, as much as in them lies, that of the Person they admire ; and then, I prophesy, the number of those, who in a Life of Love are threatned with a *Hell of Inquietudes*, will infinitely exceed those, promis'd a *Heaven of Felicity*.

But what can those Women expect but Misery, and the Contempt of the Person they admire, who are so weak, or rather forward, as to surrender without a Summons ? Custom, and the more natural Boldness of the Sex, makes Courtship the business of the Man, and where Inclination dictates, the Tongue or Pen will never fail to speak ; but where they are silent on his side, the Woman, sure, can have but little Hope hers will succeed : and she who takes it for a Maxim, that *Love begets Love*, will find herself miserably mistaken. A Gentleman of my acquaintance, who is neither ill-natur'd nor vain, gave me the proof of it the other day, by showing, and giving me leave to publish a Declaration of this kind, which he had lately received from a Lady, for whom he never profess'd any thing more than a common Civility : there was a long prose Letter, but I shall insert nothing but the Tag of Verse which concluded it, for fear my Readers should be as much tired, as the Person to whom it was sent.

*How vain are the Resolves which Lovers make ?
Only in force, till we have power to break :
A thousand times, I, to myself, have sworn,
That on your dangerous Charms I'd gaze no more ;
Far from the Musick of your Tongue wou'd fly ;
Keep my Griefs silent, and in Absence die.*

Yet, when I'm told a Visit you'll bestow,
 A sudden Joy does my Designs o'rethrow,
 I have no Breath—no Voice to answer, No.
 Pleas'd, tho' confus'd, I scarce restrain my Feet
 From wildly running your Approach to meet :
 But when you see my Face—Oh then ! if e'er
 You'd learn'd Love's Lesson, which the Looks declare
 In tender Characters, you'd read mine there.
 But you, alas ! to soft Desires a Foe,
 My Transports cannot, or else will not know :
 When I reflect, how with disdainful Eye,
 I've often heard you Cupid's Shafts defy ;
 I fain wou'd scorn the Power which you despise,
 And quitting Love, to nobler Passions rise,
 To merit your Esteem, ambitious Aim !
 Sublimely tow'r, by Friendship's sacred Claim :
 But ah ! the Weakness of my Sex denies ;
 Reason ill-guarded from my Bosom flies,
 Nor can withstand th' Inchantment of your Eyes :
 The more I look, the more my Soul dissolves,
 And Charms resistless, melt my fix'd Resolves !
 Too lovely, and too wise, with Honour use
 This forc'd Confession of an artless Muse.

But, if there be never so great a Sympathy of
 Soul between two Persons, yet if there be any in-
 dissoluble Impediment, such as Marriage, former
 Contracts, vast Disparity of Birth or Fortune,
 &c. to disunite their Bodies ; the Blessings such an
 Amour can produce, will hardly make amends for
 the Pains. What Prospect can a Woman have,
 who has dispos'd of her Hand to one, and her
 Heart to another, but a dreadful Chaos of Confu-
 sion, a mingled Mass of Shame and Guilt, and not
 one glimmering Dawn of Hope to guide her thro'
 that Night of Horror back to Reason's Day ?

What shall we do then ? Must we, because we
 are married, shun all Conversation but such as we
 are

are sure can have no Title to our Esteem ! or if we chance to see a Person adorn'd with all the Excellencies that Art and Nature can bestow, must we renounce our Senses, be blind and deaf, to be innocent ?—No, certainly, and it wou'd favour more of the *Prude*, than the *Free-Speaker* I profess myself to be, to lay an Injunction so severe: 'tis an utter Impossibility to avoid loving such a one, and I know not, if it wou'd not be a *Sin* to deny one's Admiration to a Person who seems ordain'd by Heaven to attract it. But then, in the *Direction* of that *Love* and *Admiration*, is our *Virtue* and our *Wisdom* to be prov'd ; and I cannot be of that Author's Opinion, who, describing a very lovely Person, says,

*In pity to your Sex, this Man was sent,
That you might love, and yet be innocent :
For sure no Crime with him you can commit ;
Or, if you cou'd, his Form excuses it.*

The Merit of the Person is, I grant, a vast Mitigation of the Faults our Passion for him may prevail on us to be guilty of ; because *Reason* is then no more an Enemy to *Nature*, but gives a Sanction to each unbounded Wish : yet still there are such Things as *Religion*, and the *Esteem of the World*, which, if duly consider'd, will weigh down all other Motives.

But to pursue my Design, which was not to enter any farther into a Discourse of what the World calls *criminal* Conversations, than consists in the *writing* part. The Lady, whose Letters I have taken the liberty to translate, tho she has been cautious enough in expressing any thing (even in those the most tender among them) which can give the Reader an Assurance she had forfeited her Virtue ; yet there is not one, but what sufficiently

ciently proves how impossible it is to maintain such a Correspondence, without an Anxiety and continual Perturbation of Mind, which I think a Woman must have bid farewell to her Understanding, before she could resolve to endure.

In the very first she plainly discovers the Agitation of her Spirits, confesses she knows herself in the wrong, and that every Expression her Tenderness forces from her, is a Stab to her Peace; she dreads the Effects of her Lover's too powerful Attractions, doubts her own Strength of resisting such united Charms as she finds in him, and trembles at the Apprehensions, that by some unlucky Accident the Secret should be known. Every thing alarms her; the Visit he made with that Gentleman, whom she calls *Monsieur de P—*, the Loss of the Diamond, and a thousand other little Chances, which, in so long a Conversation, must questionless have happened: 'Tis impossible to be conscious of any thing we wish to conceal, without suspecting the most undesigning Words and Actions as Snares laid to entrap us. As the Thief takes every Bush for a Pursuer, and on the least Rustle which the Wind makes through the Leaves, is ready to lay down the Booty, which, perhaps, he has hazarded his Life to obtain; so this unfortunate Lady, divided between Excess of *Love*, and Nicety of *Honour*, could neither resolve to give a loose to the *one*, nor entirely obey the Precepts of the *other*, but suffered herself to be tossed alternately by both. And tho the Person she loved was most certainly (if such a thing can be) deserving all the Condescensions a Woman could make, by his Affidity, Constancy, and Gratitude, yet it must be a good while before she could receive those Proofs; and the Disquiets she suffered in that time of Probation, were, I think, if no worse ensued, too dear a Price for the
the

the Pleasure of being beloved by the most engaging and most charming of his Sex.

If then the bare *Apprehensions* of any Misfortune attending such an Amour, are terrible, what must be the *Certainty*? What Pangs, what miserable Tortures of Reflection must we feel, when, convinced of what we feared, either from the Censures of the un pitying *World*, or the Inconstancy of an ungrateful *Lover* — If, in spite of all imaginable Caution to preserve it, such a private Correspondence be discovered, what dreadful Consequences may attend it? — The Fury of a Husband, so justly enraged, can often be satisfied with nothing less than something fatal to *one* or *both* the Violators of his Honour; or if any Considerations of Self-Love should set a Curb to the Violence of his Resentment, that way, either perpetual Quarrels, or eternal Separation, must be her Doom. Nay, put the Case, he should bear his Injuries with a patience which is not to be found in any other Nation, nor very rarely in ours, and he should promise to *forgive* so far as not to reproach her; he never can *forget*: and how can a Wife, so culpable, endure even the Upbraidings of his Looks? What his Tongue forbears to speak, she every moment will discover in his Eyes, each Glance will wound her with Remorse, and call the guilty Blushes to her Cheeks. Nor is it enough, if she know herself innocent of any real Crime, if conscious of having given a just Occasion of Suspicion. *Shakespear* says,

————— *Trifles light as Air,*
Are to the Jealous, Confirmations strong
As Proofs of Holy Writ ———

And I know not, setting Religion apart, if it is not a greater fault, since the ill Conduct of a
Wife

Wife reflects upon the Husband, to give, by too free a Behaviour, the World cause to censure *her* and *laugh* at him, than it would be to grant even the most criminal Condescension with Circumspection : but of the Fears, the Terrors, and continual Disquiets which must attend that Circumspection, I have already said enough, to let my Reader know how blameable I think any one, who enters into a necessity of making use of it.

If, on the other side, a Woman should find herself deceived in the Person for whom she has despised all other Considerations, slighted, and at last forsaken by him ; how far beyond the reach of Words must be the Agonies of such a State ! What Idea of Misery can we form which can come up to the reality of this ! When Thought becomes a Rack, Remembrance a Hell, and *past* Endearments sharpen *present* Pains, as the *Poet* justly expresses it :

*What do the Damn'd endure, but to despair,
And knowing Heaven, to know it lost for ever ?*

And yet, amidst this Horror without a Name—this burning—bleeding—this Heart-rending Anguish, a Woman (if she has still so much Remains of Reason left, as to regard her Character) must be obliged to feign an Insensibility, smother the rising Sighs, dress up her Face in Smiles, wear a composed Serenity in her Countenance, when all the Furies are at work within her, when her Soul swells with just Resentment, and wild Despair disjoins each Faculty, and splits the Brain.—Oh hard Condition ! which while it yields the most exquisite of Torments, forbids us to complain : All *other* Woes exposed, create Compassion, and friendly Pity eases Fortune's Wounds ; but *this* revealed, smarts with severer Pains ! and festers

festers in the open Air. Diffimulation *here* alone can aid us, and shield our Fame from the keen Blasts of Eagle-eyed Detraction; but how difficult a Task 'tis thus to play the Hypocrite, or whether it be possible to do it undiscovered, those only, who have been in so wretched a Circumstance, can justly determine: but the multitude of Instances, which daily furnish out the Tea-Table Conversation, leave us no great room to believe that there are many Proficients in the Art on *this* account, however famous our Sex is esteemed to be in any *other*.

Sometimes too a Woman, besides her own Engagement, is so unfortunate as to place her Affections on a Man who is also married; and what has she not then to fear from such a Rival? No Fury can equalize that of *Female Jealousy*, the prideful Vanity of engrossing a Heart, is a Foible so inherent to our Sex in general, but more especially among the *European Ladies*, that nothing but a true Knowledge of the World, and an exact Scrutiny into ourselves, can make us free from it. From hence therefore it follows, that the *least* worthy have always the *greatest* share of Self-Sufficiency and Conceit, and consequently can less endure to think another, if ever so deserving, should be preferred to her. She will leave no Artifice unpractised to maintain her Prerogative, and ruin the Person who she believes has invaded it; indeed, if the Man be really in love, or have a generous Disposition, on *him* such mean Designs will never work the Effect she aims at; but then she seldom fails of destroying the Reputation of the envied *Woman*: She has the Ceremony of the Church—the Sanction of the Law on her side; as *Cleopatra* says,

D

She

*She bears the spacious Title of a Wife,
To gild her Cause, and draw the list'ning World
To pity her Misfortunes —*

And whether she exclaims with, or without Reason, 'tis all one, the Multitude generally take things upon Credit, few give themselves the trouble of examining the Truth of what they hear, and there is a vicious Depravity in the Natures of most People, which inclines them rather to believe the worst than the best. A Woman indeed, who takes such Measures against her Rival, must not only render herself despicable and hateful to a Husband of any Soul or Spirit, but also provoke him to exert that Authority, which both Divine and Human Law has given him over her, to curb the licentious Clamours of her Rage: But then what she dares not attempt in *publick*, she will be sure to do in *private*; she then works underground like a Mole. And as there are scarce any, if never so worthless, but have their Flatterers; a Wife, in such a Circumstance, will find enough who will humour her Folly, and perhaps, merely for the sake of dear Detraction and Scandal, become her Emissaries of Mischief: These are immediately employed, and from the exhaustless Ocean of her Malice, a thousand Lyes and barbarous Inventions run thro the Currents of their Tongues. Nor does she regard the overwhelming her Husband's Peace of Mind and Reputation, so she can but sink those of the Woman he admires: The irrevocable Tye of Marriage past, nothing can make her less than *Wife*, and, secure of being a Sharer in his Fortune, delights to plague a Heart she fancies she no longer has dominion over: And I think what the most excellent of our *English* Authors, or, I believe, I may venture to say, the

the World affords, has laid on a very different Subject, may be properly enough apply'd to a jealous and meanly designing Wife :

*The Village-Cur, by Night, thus barks within,
Arm'd, in close Quarters, with a Mastiff's Grin.*

But how vastly different (as I have before observed) this Passion is from Love, I leave to the judgment of any disinterested Reader : *Love* is soft, silent, gentle, and humble ; hard to believe Injuries, patient in enduring, and generous in forgiving them : *Jealousy* imagines Wrongs when they are never meant, is restless and turbulent on Suspicion, and cruel and revengeful on the Certainty : loud, violent, and tempestuous, if let loose ; or basely treacherous, undermining, and malicious, if controlled.

A Woman, therefore, who, in spite of such Obstacles, allows herself to converse with a Man more tenderly than she is willing should be known, walks as in a narrow Path, hedged on each side with Thorns, which there is scarcely a possibility of passing through unhurt, either by domestick Jealousy, or foreign Malice : The Husband's, or the Rival's Rage (if her Director *Love* has not more Eyes than *Argus*) will certainly take hold of her, and plant such cruel Marks of Fury on her Character, as Time can never efface.

But of all the Submissions which Love exacts from his Votaries, there is none so little conformable to Reason, as that of endeavouring to regain once lost Affection. You may as easily hope to re-animate the Body, when the Soul has left it, as renew Desire, once dead ; as Mr. *Dryden* very justly expresses it in the Character of *Morat* :

*To Love once past, we cannot backward move ;
Call yesterday again, and I may love.*

Yet there are some Women mean-spirited enough to attempt it ; and so weak, as to imagine a foolish Perseverance and continued Tenderneſs, after the worst of Uſage, will, in time, have Influence over a grateful Mind, and lure the wandering Heart back to its former Fondneſs : but so far from that, I believe a Woman in greater danger of being abandoned by the Object of her Affection, for loving *too much* than *too little*. If we look into the World, we shall generally find, that the more Merit of that kind a Woman is possessed of, the less she is regarded by her Lover. The inconstant gay *Coquette* may use him as she pleases, he fears to lose, and therefore is assiduous ; while the too-generous, faithful, undesigning Heart, despised, neglected by him, shall groan beneath a Load of Anguish, and, unpitied, break.

This Humour, almost universal among them, is commonly termed Ingratitude ; *that* indeed is the Appendix, but I am of the opinion, there may be another Cause assigned. Every body knows that Men, in their days of Courtship, promise a thousand times more than they ever mean, or indeed can perform ; and there is a kind of Pride, mixed Shame in the Natures of most of them, which makes them use a Person the worse, when conscious they are not able to use her so well as she deserves : and because they cannot keep up to the Protestations they have made, or any way equalize the Favours she has bestowed, disown the Tye, and scorn the Obligation.

But, methinks, if a Woman would give herself leave to reflect, how little a Man (whatever other Excellencies he may be master of) who gives Oc-
casion

cast of Complaint, is worth complaining to, or the small probability there is of having those Grievances redressed by him who has inflicted them ; she would never stoop to a Humiliation, at once so mean and vain. When after, perhaps, Years of Courtship, a thousand Vows and Imprecations, Tears, Sighs, Swoonings, and all the countless nameless Arts of well-dressed Flattery, a Woman has been brought to that degree of tender Passion, as to resign her All—relinquish Honour, Virtue, Interest, hazard her Fame, and everlasting Hopes, to buy the Peace of an inconstant, or deceitful, Lover ; she must be, certainly, of a most abject Soul, who can *intreat* for what she once was *sued* to ; from the *Adored* become the *Suppliant*, and, with a base Submission, pursue, with weeping Eyes, and outstretched Arms, the ungrateful Wretch, who flies the Shrine, where once his Wishes, Hopes, and all his Joys were centered. No, in a Case like this, Pride only is becoming ; and tho the Heart weeps Blood—the Eye-balls start—each Limb, with Tremblings, loses its nervous Use—and inward Horror shakes the whole Fabrick like an Earthquake ; a noble Mind will struggle thro the Pangs, if not *conceal*, *disguise*, under some other Name, the unconquerable Dart, affect, at least, a generous Disdain, and seem to scorn the Scorn.

Not but this Task is difficult, and the more so, because in such a Circumstance we are too apt to suffer a little flattering Parasite, called *Hope*, to linger about the Heart, and tempt us with a thousand pleasing and fictitious Views. Remembrance too becomes our Foe—*What has been, may be*, says the self-deluded Fair ; *my Eyes had once the power to charm—my Softness once could sooth—and Wit enchant—those Graces still remain—they have not—cannot lose their wonted Influence—at least I'll try*
their

their Force—nor yield my Soul a Prey to Grief and to Despair, till further Proof. In this Belief she calls up all her Beauties to her Face, summons in haste all her Attractions to her aid—writes to him—invents a thousand Stratagems to see him—kneels—weeps—and languishes—endeavours to alarm his Memory with the past Pleasures of their mutual Love—to kindle his pity for her present Woes—fooths and upbraids by turns; but all in vain.

*The eager Hurry of Desire once o'er,
We then are lovely, fair, or wise, no more :
All our Defects in Magnitude appear,
And not one Virtue claims a pitying Tear.*

The more we labour for the Attainment of our Wishes, (of whatsoever kind they are) the greater must our Vexation be, when disappointed. We have then the melancholy Reflection, that we have lost our Time, as well as our Desires, and have taken pains for no other purpose than to be contemned; at least, it generally happens so, in the Affair I am speaking of. Some Men, indeed, may have Good-Nature enough to pity a Passion which they no longer have it in their power to reward: but how poor a Relief is that? and how mortified must be the Vanity of that Woman, who finds in the Object of her Affection, a kind of a Regret and Uneasiness for being beloved by her? But to *one* who has so much Generosity as to commiserate the Woes he has occasioned, there are a *Million* who will despise, expose, and ridicule.

Fondness often degenerates into Silliness; a Woman must, most certainly, very much lessen herself in the opinion of a Man of Sense, when he finds her capable of entertaining him with nothing but the History of her Passion in his *Presence*, and on every little *Absence*, and perhaps but imaginary Coldness,

Coldness, wearies him with Letters filled with Reproaches and Complaints. Such a Behaviour will in time grow too wearisome to be endured; the most ardent Affection may be tired with too eager a Pursuit, and *Love*, wanting a place to rest and gather breath, will droop his Wings, and die amidst the Chace. Nor is this Impatience and Rapidity of Temper, always a proof of the most perfect Tenderness: I believe, where a Man *really* loves, his Passion is as strong, as lasting, and as noble, as any Woman's can be; but whoever they are, of either Sex, who suffer it to engross all their Thoughts, deserve not the Esteem of a Person of Understanding. When a Man, extinguishing the noble Thirst of *Fame*, neglecting Business, the Calls of Glory, and the Service of his King, his Country, or his Friends, in whatever Employment his Education, or Station, may make him fit for; and like *Hercules*, sits spinning at a Distaff: his Soul becomes unworthy of his Form, he ceases to answer the End of his Creation, and disappoints, not only the Expectations of the World, but his Maker's Design. A Woman, therefore, who approves of so degenerate an Effeminacy in her Lover, cannot be said to love him truly: he may delight her *Vanity*, but can never charm her *Understanding*; and whatever Condescensions she may make him, are but to please herself; for if she be not a Fool, she cannot think he merits the noblest Aim of Love, which consists in *giving*, not *receiving* Joy.

When Love animates the Souls of two worthy Persons, it inspires equal Ardour for each other's Glory; *he* bounds his Wishes, *she* her Tenderness, both know to restrain their Passion, when giving a loose to it might be a Prejudice: they meet not but when it is proper; and when obliged to part, a mutual Confidence makes their Separation easy: *he* is cautious not to give occasion of Complaint,
she

she as much avoids the *finding* it ; no *Reproaches* on the one side, no *Excuses* on the other, untune the Mind, and break the Strings of Peace ; but a perpetual Harmony, such as we call the Musick of the Spheres, flows in a constant, uninterrupted Round.

But, as I said before, Examples of Passion thus managed, very rarely happen ; both Sexes are too apt to be taken with the *Outside*, and without staying to examine if the Guest *within* be any way answerable to the *Shrine*, run on in a blind Race of Passion, till Possession opens their Eyes, and and shows the hunted Toy unworthy of the pains has been taken to acquire it : then consequently follow, Remorse, Dislike, Contempt, and all the Train of Inquietudes, which we daily hear of among those who call themselves Lovers. Mr. Rowe has very prettily express'd the Misfortunes which must attend those of our Sex, who look no farther, when they make choice of an Admirer, than his exterior Graces.

*Were you, ye Fair, but cautious whom you trust,
Wou'd you but think how seldom Fools are just ;
So many of your Sex wou'd not in vain,
Of faithless Men, and broken Vows complain :
Of all the various Wretches Love has made,
How few have been by Men of Sense betray'd !
Convinc'd by Reason, they your Power confess ;
Pleas'd to be happy, as you're pleas'd to bless,
And conscious of your Worth, can never love you less.* }

Nor is this Caution necessary to Woman-kind alone ; the Men have also their share of Disquiets, when, in the election of a Mistress, Fancy, without Judgment, is consulted ; the impertinent Whims, the fantastick Airs, the causeless Jealousies, the frenzical Ravings, and the teasing Sollicitations,
those

those of our Sex, who are neither by Strength of Natural Reason, or the Force of Education, rais'd above what we may call *mere Women*, are guilty of; are very near as great a Persecution to them, as their Deceit, Inconstancy, and Ingratitude, can be to us. 'Tis therefore intirely an Impossibility for any two Persons, who are not link'd by a Sympathy of Souls, a Conformity of Notions and Manners, either to love long or truly: and when either side disappoints the Expectation of the other, 'tis a ridiculous Endeavour to patch up the broken Friendship; the old Gaps will still appear, and widen on the least new occasion, till they shatter it to pieces.

When therefore a Woman, by her own Indiscretion, has rendred herself incapable of maintaining the Conquests which her Eyes had gain'd, the wisest thing she can do, is to sit down contented with the loss, lest by the vain Attacks she makes to recover it, she discovers her own Weakness the more, and provokes the Insults of the disdainful Repeller: or if, on the contrary, the Man be the Aggressor, either through Carelessness, Ingratitude, or Falshood; and in his Behaviour *after* Possession, falls short of what he vow'd *before*; he ceases (as I have elsewhere taken notice) to deserve her Favours, and she cannot continue to make any Declarations of Love to him, without showing herself guilty of a Meanness of Spirit which merits no better Treatment.

I have dwelt the longer upon this Subject, because I know how common it is for a Woman to think she can never say too many tender things to a Man whom she has favour'd in this manner, and that she has a right to upbraid him whenever she finds him fail in the Ardour of his first Protestations. I will not dispute the Justice of her Opin-

E

nion,

nion, but would expose the Vanity of her Attempt. While this Passion continues, indeed, as the Poet says,

*No Follies fatal to the Fair can prove,
All things are Beauties in the Nymph we love.*

But when once Desire is fled, the foregoing Lines may be answer'd with these ;

*In the forsaken Fair no Charms can move,
Her Beauties vanish, when we cease to love.*

A young Lady of my acquaintance, took me with her one day to visit a Brother of hers, a Gentleman who is allowed (by all Judges of Merit) to come the nearest to Perfection, of any that yet graced Humanity : and yet this lovely, this most charming Man, had an Inconstancy, an Ingratitude in his Nature ; which, if I had not been witness of, I could not have believed. While we were there, a Porter brought a Letter to him, which he broke open with a haste which express'd the pleasure he expected in the Contents ; all the time he was reading it, his Eyes sparkled with Joy, an agreeable Flushing spread o'er his Face, and gave a new Lustre to his Complection : as soon as he had finish'd, he begg'd our pardons, and immediately sat down to answer it. Before he had well dispatched that Messenger, another came, and delivered a second Billet to him ; but how different was the manner in which he received this (it seems, so little welcome) Summons ! He carelessly threw his Eye over it, walk'd two or three Turns about the Room, yaun'd, gave a scornful Smile, and at last made a shift to *drawl* out these Words to the Bearer ; *Tell the Person*, said he,

he, that I have had a world of Business— that the Weather has been bad—and a thousand things have happened to prevent the Visit I intended; but I think I shall be there in a day or two. His Sister, who was no stranger to his Humour, presently guess'd the Truth, and observing he put both these Letters into his Pocket-Book, which lay carelessly on the Table, whisper'd to me, that she would steal it, if she cou'd get a convenient opportunity; immediately one offer'd *à propos*: a Gentleman who had some private Business with him, coming to see him, he carried him into the next Room, and in the mean time, she, not regarding his Displeasure, to satisfy her Curiosity, took out both the Letters, and making an Excuse to come away soon after he returned, went home with me, where we had the pleasure of examining our Theft. The first Letter, that which so much transported him, was worded (for I kept it with a design to publish) as follows:

Dr Sur,

I Long to se you, and haueing this Oportunity of my Housbands been abrawd to nite, send to aquaent you I should be glad of your Company if not better ingadged. Pray come about ten of the clock, that my peepel may noe nothing of the matter. I am, *Dr Dr Sur,*

Yr. humbel Sarvant and

faethful Lovear.

The other was :

I F I never was worthy of your Affection, why did you take so much pains to persuade me to an opinion I was so? And, if you thought I was, how am I alter'd, since that happy Time? In vain you wou'd conceal my Misfortune, I too well know the difference between Complaisance and Tendernefs, and shou'd think it much more generous in you, to confess the Truth, than by affecting a Passion you no longer feel, endeavour to keep up a real one in me: Inconstancy is natural, but Deceit is the greatest Villany a Man can be guilty of; the one I can forgive, the other never! However, you have nothing to fear from my Resentment; I have loved you, and ever shall, too truly to be capable of doing you any hurt, were it in my power: all I beg, is the Favour of one farewell Visit, and you no more shall be troubled with the Complaints or Upbraidings of

Your Unfortunate.

This last Letter came (as his Sister informed me, who happened to be acquainted with the Lady, and knew her hand) from a Woman who had no Foible, but her Love to him—from a Woman he had been indefatigable to gain, and in whose Possession he once plac'd his highest Felicity—Yet, see the Instability of an amorous Disposition! A new Object no sooner came in his way, than he grew weary of the old one, and for one of the most despicable of her Sex, (as we guess by her manner of writing) relinquish'd the most accomplish'd and agreeable.

But

But to come to a conclusion, for I have already drawn out this Discourse to a length beyond what I intended, there is nothing a Woman can do more to the prejudice of her Peace of Mind, her Honour, and her Reputation, than the encouraging a Correspondence of this kind: nor can any Motives whatever, that shall induce her to it, be reconciled to Reason, or to Prudence. I have touch'd with as much Brevity as the Subjects wou'd admit, on the several Causes which lead to this Extravagance, and pointed out some few of the Inconveniencies which attend it. If the little I have done, may give occasion to some abler Pen to expose them more effectually, I shall think myself happy in having given a hint, which improv'd, may be of so general a Service to my Sex.



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